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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

DECEMBER 18 1981

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Performing in words

By Roy Harris

ERVING GOFFMAN:
Forms of Talk
340pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12
(paperback, £4.95).
0 631 12788 7

Erving Goffman belongs to that distinguished minority of sociologists writing today who are prepared to rely more on the evidence of what they actually see and hear than upon what some combination of principles, prejudices and statistics tells them they ought to be seeing and hearing. So much so in Goffman's case that he must appear to many of his readers to be just the kind of academic visitor nobody really wants as a house guest (unless, of course, the hosts are secretly hoping that a sharp analysis of their family *faux pas* and linguistic lapses will get into a footnote in his next book). We probably feel we should be less than at ease in the presence of this public private-eye who seems to be for over on the look-out for candid-camera evidence which might lead to divorce proceedings between our selves and our social images.

This has been Goffman's authorial persona ever since that doctoral dissertation of thirty years ago, which sent him off on fieldwork to a remote hotel in the Shetlands. There he was evidently so intrigued and amazed by the mechanisms of more or less open hypocrisy which enabled the septuagenary Fanny Towers to function that he decided to devote his academic life to one long scrutiny of the whole apparatus of social stage-management that allows us all to get about our daily round, mind-pretending only to mind our own.

Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) was the first and perhaps still the best-known book to emerge from the early fascination with how we all manage to 'get away with it' week in week out. This was the book that earned him the Benjamin Franklin chair of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, which he still holds. It was followed by *Interaction Ritual* (1967), *Relations in Public* (1971), *Frame Analysis* (1974) and *Gender Advertisements* (1976). His latest, *Forms of Talk*, comprises five papers. Three of these have previously

been published in academic journals between 1976 and 1979. But the other two appear here in print for the first time. For those who have never read any Goffman before, *Forms of Talk* is certainly not the best book to start with. It is too technical, too heavily indebted to the work of others, and at its worst lapses into a language which can only be described as sociological gobbledegook ('expropriation of the dialogic order', 'multiple self-implicative projections', etc). Nonetheless, Goffman is too original for anything he writes to be entirely unrepresentative of him, and too acute an observer of the human scene to be dull for long.

Like all Goffman's previous work, *Forms of Talk* is a contribution to the contemporary analysis of man as a communicator. It belongs to that dominant twentieth-century trend which seeks to explain the individual as being simultaneously creator and creation of his own communicational possibilities. The trend in question is one which treats 'the whole mesh of human social life... as a system of human communication' (Margaret Mead), or even sees 'culture in its entirety as a form of communication' (B. T. Hall). From this perspective, the study of language, of art and of social behaviour in general is primarily the study of different communicational structures. Languages, following Saussure, are seen as systems of verbal signs. Art is treated as being, in Mukarovsky's phrase, 'a semiotic fact'. Everyday social interaction is explained dramatically in terms of certain communicational 'roles' which individuals learn to play - for the benefit of audiences which include themselves. Thus Sartrean existentialism on the one hand and structuralism on the other are equally important tributaries which flow into the mainstream of 'communicational' interpretations of modern man.

What all these analyses agree upon, however else they may diverge, is the centrality of man's verbal equipment for coping with the world. Talk, if we are to believe the modern theorists, is just about the most important activity we ever engage in - next to breathing, sleeping and eating, that is. It's talking that gets us through the day; talking to

our family, the people at work, the people we meet in the street or the pub. It's talking that gets the shopping done and the car service. It's talking that gets us educated, or uneducated. It's talking that gets us jobs, or places on the unemployed register. It's talking that gets us married. And it's almost certainly talking that gets us divorced. In short, without talk our whole lives - both private and public - would just fall apart. Goffman does not proclaim this belief overtly; but every page of *Forms of Talk* implies a tacit insistence upon it.

In spite of the importance of talk, however, the sciences of man have hitherto been able to tell us very

uniform method of analysis could be successfully applied to languages of all shapes and sizes, primitive or civilized, ancient or modern. It could resolve any language spoken by men into a set of constituent units and a set of fixed rules for combining those units into speakable utterances. What more needed explaining?

Very little, it seemed. Large numbers of potential linguistic theorists must at that time have taken up gardening or railway modelling instead, as pursuits likely to hold out greater intellectual challenge. Admittedly, there remained among the residual minor problems of language a question which one of the leading linguists of the day formulated as that of 'continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time'. This was known as the problem of 'discourse analysis'. But, alas, not much headway was over made with this residual problem of descriptive transformational grammar, which reopened the whole question of whether linguists had yet satisfactorily analysed what happened even within the traditional confines of a single sentence, let alone beyond. So it was back to the linguistic drawing-board. The analysis of talk would have to wait while the sentence was dealt with first.

The wait was in vain. For by the mid-1960s, transformationalists had decided to throw out the problem of what happened beyond the boundaries of the sentence. It could be thrown out, in their view, on one or other of two grounds - it hardly mattered which. One ground was that mere talk was of no concern for the theorists of linguistic competence: it obviously belonged to the quite different realm of linguistic performance. The alternative ground was that in any case most of the problems of discourse would turn out to have been dealt with en route by the transformationalists' analysis of the sentence. For any discourse can be treated - given sufficient ingenuity - as equivalent to a rather long and complex single sentence. (Substitute 'and' for full stops. Supply parenthetical 'I said', 'he said', etc. In short, treat conversation as in a novel. Isn't a novel, after all, just a sequence of sentences? And who knows that any novelist - if he threw merely stylistic considerations to the

wind - could write a novel in the form of one long, long sentence. Proust very nearly did, for heaven's sake!)

Yet it would be a great mistake to lay all the blame for neglecting the analysis of talk at the professional door of linguistics. There is a deeper, more general psychological reason. Talk is like plumbing; we ordinarily take it for granted until it goes wrong. But unlike plumbing, when it does go wrong it is something we usually have to put right ourselves. There is no plumber of talk to send for in an emergency. We have to change the verbal washers or unblock the verbal drains as best we can. In all this we have no other expertise to call on than the expertise provided by experience. That is why what people expect of talk is perhaps even more important than what they actually get.

Humpty Dumpty nonplussed Alice because what he said to her on their first encounter 'wasn't at all like conversation'. Now what exactly a conversation between a small girl and an enormous egg can reasonably be expected to be like, Lewis Carroll did not try to tell us. But almost certainly sociolinguistics will, and within the next ten years (provided the money from the SSRC and other sources does not run out in the meantime). For what Goffman and some of his fellow investigators have undoubtedly achieved within the past decade is to have elevated the study of the seeming trivialities of everyday talk to a status of considerable academic prestige. Conversation seems likely to be the vogue research topic of the 1980s. Putting casual chat under the social scientists' microscope has suddenly become as important as peering into the machinery of the human body or the atom.

Goffman's microscope in *Forms of Talk* focuses first of all on 'Replies and Responses'. This essay examines the general structure of what the author describes as the 'game-like back-and-forth processes' which 'might better be called interplay than dialogue'. Then he turns to 'Response Cycles', which include all those exclamations (often with dubious verbal credentials, such as *oops*, *cool* etc) which apparently get 'blurred out' as involuntary re-



little about it. Indeed, they were never seriously called upon to do so. Languages were worth studying, and literature was to be admired. But not talk.

Talk somehow managed to get itself to the bottom of every academic list of priorities. One might perhaps have expected linguists at least to take it seriously. After all, it was in the mid-1930s that J. R. Firth lamented the fact that 'neither linguists nor psychologists have begun the study of conversation'. He added: 'It is here we shall find the key to a better understanding of what language really is and how it works.' But few agreed with him. By the early 1950s most linguists, in their view, had already succeeded in cracking the code of human language. Linguistics had shown how a

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Antique auguries

By Garth Fowden

MICHAEL LOEWE and CARMEN BLACKER (Editors):
Divination and Oracles
244pp. George Allen and Unwin.
£15.
0 04 291016 1

The emperor Julian, fretting in Antioch on the eve of his ill-fated Persian campaign, is said to have offered so many sacrifices in his search for favourable omens that he almost induced a cattle shortage. This put a contemporary distich in mind of a facetious distich that had been prompted by the similarly macabre religiosity of Marcus Aurelius:

Deer Caesar, if you win another battle,
We are extinct. Yours truly, The White Cattle.

Until recently, British scholars found little difficulty agreeing with the same historian's judgment that such behaviour was "superstitious, not truly religious". Aping the supercilious rationalism of Gibbon, who derided late paganism's "fortification of prodigies", Gilbert Murray spoke of a "failure of nerve", while E. R. Dodds deployed medical and psychological verbiage about "endemic diseases" and "endogenous neuroses" that implicitly denied late antique man even the small consolation of responsibility for his own actions. Yet, if the book under review proves anything, it is that there has never been a society where men did not seek supernatural guidance over life's crises. Of late, French scholars in particular have shown themselves willing to come to terms with this universal phenomenon — one thinks of the volumes on *La divination*, edited by A. Caquot (1968), and on *Divination et rationalité*, edited by J.-P. Vernant (1974). It is perhaps unnecessary to speculate whether *Divination and Oracles* is designed to compete with these — its interest lies more in its own failure of nerve, and in what that reveals about our ability to understand cultures more con-

scious of their place in the divine scheme of things than our own.

Of nine chapters, eight were originally delivered as a series of lectures in the University of Cambridge in 1979. The titles, in this order, are: "Tibet" (Lama Chime Radha, Rinpoche), "China" (M. Loewe), "Japan" (Carmen Blacker), "The Classical World" (J.S. Morrison), "The Germanic World" (H. Ellis Davidson), "The Babylonians and Hittites" (O. R. Gurney), "Ancient Egypt" (J. D. Ray), "Ancient Israel" (J. R. Porter), and "Islam" (R. B. Serjeant).

The introduction informs us that "the book was not conceived as an exercise in comparison or contrast", and yet the Babylonians, Hittites, Egyptians and Israelites all belonged to the culturally interlinked world of the ancient Near East, which in its latter phase came into contact with the younger civilization that was emerging round the Aegean. No hint of these contacts is conveyed by this book, least of all in the chapter on "The Classical World".

This is a sin merely of omission. Much more serious is the failure to discuss at all the synthesis of Greek and Oriental beliefs about man's possibilities of communication with the divine world that emerged in the Hellenistic and Roman period. The relevant parts of this volume (with the exception of J. D. Ray's sensitive contribution) are typical products of our rigidly demarcated scholarly tradition, in which the Orientalist knocks off at the first snort of Alexander the Great's horse on the Asiatic shore of the Hellenes, and hands over his work-bench (but not his tools or his competence) to the incoming shift of Classicists; while the Classicists themselves propagate a view of their subject which permits a survey of divination and oracles in ancient Greece to omit virtually all reference to inscriptions evidence (such as that from the Asklepieion at Epidauros, to mention only the most fundamentally significant), and to discuss the Roman aspect of the subject in terms of Livy and Cicero, on the grounds that "under the Empire divination was still practised by the

colleagues of augurs, but the spread of sophistication, and the growing influence of Christianity, hastened the decline in belief in its truth which Cicero already attests."

It was, of course, precisely in the Hellenistic and Roman world — in the Greek magical papyri, the oracles, the "Chaldaean Oracles", the "Oracles of the Sibyls" (the "Oracles of the Pythia") (J.S. Morrison), "The Germanic World" (H. Ellis Davidson), "The Babylonians and Hittites" (O. R. Gurney), "Ancient Egypt" (J. D. Ray), "Ancient Israel" (J. R. Porter), and "Islam" (R. B. Serjeant).

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which there is little probability of historical contact. Here, evidently, is a major problem for specialists in the socio-psychology of religion. Evans Pritchard's work among the Azande immediately springs to mind, especially since it has already influenced bachelors of late antique religion such as Peter Brown. *Divination and Oracles* contains only one glancing reference to this work (by Ray), and deliberately makes no attempt to grapple with the wider problem.

Secondly, it is important to avoid the danger, implicit in the first line of approach, of assuming that techniques designed to bring about personal communication between a god and his adept are "superstitious", and therefore belong exclusively to "popular" religion. In societies as different as China, Israel, ancient Greece and Iceland there was a close and natural association between divination and wisdom, what we would call philosophy; and in late antiquity the Neoplatonist Iamblichus could treat divination as the first step on the philosopher's way of ascent to

wards divination. Even in the magical papyri from Egypt it is possible to find signs of this up-grading of techniques originally intended to serve baser ends, such as the invocation of a god's help in eliminating one's wife's lover, or affording a sumptuous banquet to impress one's friends.

This ready adaptability of divination and oracular techniques renders them almost incomprehensible when detached from their broader intellectual context. In a polytheistic thought-world, where it was believed that men could persuade and even blackmail the gods, there was cold logic in Julian's onslaught on the Antiochene caste; while in 1599 the apparent unwillingness of the communist Chinese to attack Tibet during astrologically unfavourable months testified to the residual influence of divination in an atheist society. By and large, *Divination and Oracles* does not show this sort of sensitivity to context, for all the erudition and perceptiveness of some of its contributors.

Following the rules

By Paul Heelas

RENATO ROSALDO:
Hoagst Headhunting 1883-1974
A Study in Society and History
313pp. Stanford University Press.
£18.50.
0 8047 1046 5

As a sequel to Michelle Rosaldo's *Knowledge and Passion* (TLS, November 21, 1980) Renato Rosaldo now provides a detailed historical account of headhunting and feuding, alliances, individual life-paths, and social organization among the Ilongot people of the Philippines. His claim that "attention to historical process cannot simply be aggregated to, but rather requires a fundamental reevaluation of the social structure, and that the reconceiving in turn demands sharp departure from earlier ways of writing ethnography" should interest anthropologists in general in his study.

At one level of analysis Rosaldo is successful in showing the Ilongot of history. Here in northern Luzon a "number of social processes... are ordered less through the simple realization of structural principles than through struggles among people with different stakes in the outcome of events". Because the constraining impact of rules is weak, dissonant investigation is required in order to grasp what prompts participants to devise various strategies, or what encourages them to interpret rules in various ways — in terms of their recollections of what has happened in the past and the circumstances to which they find themselves. Marriage, reedence, feuding and alliances all owe much to individual initiative. Thus Ilongot "often insist... that in marital choice they follow the desires of their hearts rather than prescriptive rules or the dictates of their elders".

Anthropologists have long recognized that, if the object of their studies be linked to chess, synchronic analysis of the rules of the game (Raymond Firth's "social structure") can be complemented by diachronic analysis of actual encounters on the board (Firth's "social organization"). If he wants to be genuinely innovative, Rosaldo has to show that the structural level of Ilongot society is embedded in history; and that the Ilongot are able to construct, manipulate, and even resist the social world into which they were born.

(my emphasis) Rosaldo's objection to the chess model (he himself uses the analogy of actors following scripts) is that it does not recognize "that human life is both given and actively constructed". Unfortunately, he does not make it entirely clear how far construction and hence history makes an impact on rules, values and concepts, with the consequence that his analysis does not really succeed in explaining social change in closed societies (that

is, explaining how agents operating within society can break free from and change the rules of the game). Sometimes he writes of "the interplay of received structures and human activity" (my emphasis) in the whole, though, his view is that "social regularities should be conceived of as cultural 'typifications' that is, a loosely organized body of constructs that serve less to regulate conduct than to provide the terms within which action becomes intelligible."

It would seem, however, that structures and cultural idioms function as standard, timeless, "models for" social activity to a greater extent than is implied in Rosaldo's "models of" view. For example, we are told that headhunting, a crucial rite of passage in the Ilongot male life cycle, is not to be regarded "as the automatic application of structural rules, but, in a statistical manner, as one or more central tendencies in a scatter of possibilities". Exactly when youths manage to "toas a bead" is a statistical matter — success depends upon opportunity. But it is significant that in her book Michelle Rosaldo treated headhunting as firmly regulated by a system of rules, not just correctly described by a model listing a set of rules. Images and rules motivate individuals and make decisions regular and predictable, and they must be followed for Ilongot to be what they should be. These images operate in time (youths have to wait their chance) but in traditional society were also timeless (when youths had their chance they "tossed heads" rather than engaging in other improvised forms of initiation).

Although Rosaldo traces the history of social activity with skill, he does not convincingly show that the rule, structures and cultural idioms — which must be present for strategies and improvisations to be meaningful — are themselves generally affected by history. The dominant impression, in fact, is that Ilongot society has been remarkably well suited to assimilating historical changes, such as the Japanese invasion of the islands, to its own rhyme and reason. Only recently have external agencies suppressed headhunting. The fact that Ilongots have failed to assimilate these few pressures hardly seems to require a fundamental reconception of the role of historical explanation in traditional societies.

Old Ilongot: An Introductory Course (378pp. Oxford University Press. £15. Paperback £7.95. 0 19 11173 8) by Sigrid Valfeld and James B. Cathey is published in association with the American Scandinavian Foundation. It is designed to serve the needs of both linguists and literary scholars, and consists of thirty-five lessons each dealing with one or more selected grammatical topics.

Symbolic locks

By Edmund Leach

GANANATH OBEYSEKERE:
Medusa's Hair
An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience
217pp. University of Chicago Press.
£15.75.
0 26 61600 2

"Serpent-worship unfortunately fell years ago into the hands of speculative writers, who mixed it up with occult philosophy, Druidical mysteries and that portentous nonsense called the 'Ariete Symbolism', till now sober students hear the very name of Ophiolatry with a shiver. Yet it is in itself a rational and instructive subject of inquiry especially notable for its width of range in mythology and religion." Thus Edward Tylor writing in 1871. Although on first reading Gananath Obeyesekere's book appears to be a manifestation of the persisting love-hate relationship between the intellectual heirs of Freud and Malinowski which has surfaced intermittently ever since the early 1920s, it is really part of a very much older tradition.

If we leave aside the relatively recent exercises which have developed out of Levi-Strauss's structuralist interpretations, everything that he says about "fetishism" and "magic" and the meaning of religious symbolism has its roots in an interest in the "phallic" components of Hindu iconography which goes back at least to de Brosses writing in 1760. It is because Obeyesekere manages to say something fresh about this very basic area of anthropological theory rather than for his half-hearted endorsement of a psychoanalytic approach to ethnography or for any specially novel information about contemporary

South Asian religion, that I heartily recommend this book to all my anthropological colleagues.

For reasons which will be apparent to the reader I have a prejudiced interest to will approach the central theme tangentially. The author is now Professor of Anthropology at Princeton. He formerly held a similar position at the University of California, San Diego, and before that was Head of the Department of Sociology in the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya. Unlike most of his compatriots in this field he has conducted most of his field research among Sinhalese speakers in his Sri Lankan homeland.

All modern social anthropologists set themselves the goal of working through the local vernacular without the aid of interpreter, but it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that a visiting anthropologist from a foreign land can be sensitive to all the nuances which are recognized by those for whom the local language is mother tongue. This is a complex matter. The anthropologist who chooses to study institutions which have been familiar since childhood has linguistic advantages but is also faced with many special difficulties. I will not go into that. The relevant point is that Professor Obeyesekere justifies the psychoanalytic interpretations which he places upon the cultural evidence he records by emphasizing that he and his informants were in every case both native speakers of the same language and shared a great deal of common cultural background.

What is the argument all about? This is where I come in. Back in 1951 the psychoanalyst Charles Berg published a short monograph entitled *The Unconscious Significance of Hair*. Obeyesekere calls it a "silly book". I myself thought it very interesting. Berg was a friend of mine and this led to a discussion between

us about the relevance of ethnographic evidence for psychoanalysis and vice versa. Berg, following Freud himself, assumed that ethnographic data can be used to support psychoanalytic hypotheses; I was sceptical and argued that the relationship between the "private" symbols employed by an analyst's patients and the "public" symbols which appear in religious ritual and comparable ethnographic contexts is problematic, though I readily conceded that some such relationship must exist.

Berg and I had planned to publish our agreement/disagreement in the form of a joint paper. In the event Berg died in 1957, so only my half of the combined essay (in somewhat amended form) ever got into print.

My essay "Magical Hair" was published in 1958. Obeyesekere takes this essay as his starting-point. He rejects my thesis that a clear distinction can and should be drawn between private individual (psychological) and public (sociological) symbolism. I cannot object to that. I must however protest that in a number of places Obeyesekere completely misrepresents the force of my argument. For example on page 36 he asserts that I maintained that "the meaning of matted hair is chastity", whereas what I actually maintained was that the (public) meaning of hair as religious symbol is "potency", which is ambiguously sexual and divine. Anyone who may be interested in my own views of the matter under discussion should go back to my original essay.

Leaving that aside, Obeyesekere's purpose is to explore in considerable depth the whole feedback process by which individuals derive their private system of symbolism from their cultural environment and then (in some nonovistic cases) project it back again upon the encompassing cultural system.

Most of the empirical evidence which is discussed derives from the life histories (as provided by extended personal interviews) of eight "ecstatic priests" and one Buddhist ascetic. Seven out of the nine are women. The histories read as if they were the records of free association concocted on a psychoanalyst's couch; they include details of family background, sex experience, dreams and visions. These last employ metaphors which are heavily dependent upon the Buddhist/Hindu folk theology of contemporary Sinhalese.

The subjects of these investigations have it in common that they have all been associated in one way or another with the famous pilgrimage centre of Kataragama in southern Sri Lanka. They also have it in common that they all adopt a hairstyle of matted locks commonly perceived as snakes which are in some fashion a gift or manifestation of the divinity with whom the devotee ecstatic is associated.

Obeyesekere has been publishing materials relating to the various cults focussed on Kataragama for a number of years, but in this book the institutional aspects of Kataragama are in the background. The case histories are presented as a contribution to general theory. As background to this theory, he adopts the view favoured by a number of American anthropologists (eg. Clifford Geertz and Schneider) who hold that "culture" should be viewed primarily as "a system of symbols" that can be interpreted without reference to the infrastructure of material and economic facts of which the symbolic ideology is a part. This is not a position which I favour myself or is it one that is at all generally adopted by British anthropologists, but most of the argument of this book would probably be compatible with other anthropological attitudes.

The overall point of the presentation is to show that recent develop-

ments in Sinhalese religion (which have been reported by Obeyesekere in other publications) owe their emergence to the innovative acts of individuals rather than to the unanalysed processes of historical accident or cultural diffusion, which are commonly held to account for cultural change.

Obeyesekere goes very much further than I would myself in accepting the validity of psychoanalytic assumptions concerning the relationship between adult personality and infant experience and about the general nature of the symbolic sublimation of sexual experience and frustration; but the argument is pre-empted with conviction and clarity.

It is an obvious commonplace to say that, in the history of any society, cultural symbols are constantly being put to new uses. Sometimes familiar symbols are given new meanings; sometimes new symbols are introduced from elsewhere; sometimes there is a complete innovation which is neither transformation nor copy. This we all know. But as to just how it comes about that such innovations are first introduced and then generally accepted we know very little. Obeyesekere uses his case histories to exemplify the role of individual innovative symbolic behaviour in generating such change.

He uses the theme of hair symbolism as his central focus because the literature on this topic is large and because shaven heads and matted locks are prominent distinctive features in the symbolic discourse of the religious specialists who provide his evidence. But, as I have indicated, the underlying argument of the book goes much deeper than that. Specialists in the anthropology of Sri Lanka will read the book as a matter of course but it also deserves the attention of a wide variety of psychologists and anthropologists who have no special knowledge of the ethnography of South Asia.

Hawaiian interlude

By G. B. Milner

CHARLES DE VARIGNY:
Fourteen Years in the Sandwich Islands 1855-1868
Translated by Alfons L. Korn
277pp. Hawaii University Press.
\$24.95.
0 8248 0709 X

The main interest of this work, originally published by Hachette in 1874, lies in the light it throws on Hawaii in the 1850s and '60s, and especially on the first five years of King Kamehameha V's reign (1863-1868).

Born in Paris in 1829, Charles-Victor Crosnier was educated at the Lycée Bourbon (later the Lycée Condorcet), where he became a schoolfellow and close friend of Hippolyte Taine. He seems to have been an impetuous youth who made strenuous efforts to improve his fortunes, first by adding his father's name (de Varigny) to his name, and then by emigrating to California in 1851 in the days of the Gold Rush. There he spent three years as a journalist and minor consular official, marrying the daughter of another French immigrant. The young couple (intending to return to France by way of the Far East) arrived in Honolulu in 1855, where they stayed several months while they awaited the birth of their second child. They were attracted by the Hawaiian scene and decided to begin with in the French consulate.

De Varigny was a man of parts, a keen observer of scenery, geography and men, as well as of politics, commerce and industry. Before long he qualified himself for the post of King's

him the portfolio of finance minister. Varigny rapidly restored the monetary stability of the kingdom, and in 1865 was made minister of foreign affairs and leader of the cabinet.

Returning to France in 1868 after a strenuous period in office, and ostensibly to negotiate (or renew) a number of commercial treaties in Europe, Varigny began a period of long-overdue and apparently well-deserved leave. Before the family could return to Hawaii, however, the Franco-Prussian war had begun. His traumatic course and aftermath prolonged the absence of the King's minister. Finally the King's death in 1872, and the need to give the Varignys children a French education, seem to have persuaded the parents not to return to Honolulu. Varigny returned to journalism, wrote one or two travel books, and died in 1899.

But for its relative proximity to the "North American mainland and its strategic importance" (Hawaii, which soon after Cook's and Vancouver's voyages had been united by a powerful and determined (as well as far-seeing) Polynesian chieftain, King Kamehameha I, the founder of the dynasty, might, like Tonga, have retained both its monarchy and a measure of independence. The royal family, in fact, sought the protection of the benevolent British monarch, and especially of his queen, and his Anglian missionaries, rather than a more immediate and sterner American and republican missionary presence.

In terms of Hawaiian cultural values, universal suffrage (demanded by a majority of the white settlers) represented a threat to the power of the King and the nobles. The fact remained, however, that Christianity had come in the shape of puritanical and single-minded missionaries from New England, whose powerful influ-

ence militated in favour of a democratic and republican form of government. While no one took exception to democracy as such, in the context of a rapid rise in immigration (especially from the Far East) and of the unequal struggle of the Hawaiians to maintain their distinctive cultural values without a proper political or economic infrastructure, universal suffrage was bound to bring the old order to an end: by the 1890s the Hawaiian monarchy had been overthrown.

In this book, written twenty years earlier, Varigny shows remarkable foresight. Because prevailing trends could, in his opinion, only lead in the end to an American take-over, he supported and championed the cause of independence, and especially the domestic and foreign policies of the King. Here was a patriotic Frenchman, settled in Hawaii, who longed for French rule had been established in Tahiti, served as a loyal minister of the Hawaiian crown, not only enjoying the confidence of Kamehameha V, but the tacit support of Napoleon III. Like the Reverend Shirley Baker, the architect of Tongan independence, Varigny did not allow himself to be handicapped in the working for the colonial aggrandizement of the French Second Empire.

Yet though in the face of the lack of any direct interest in Hawaii on the part of British, French, colonial rule might have been the only certain way of frustrating long-term American designs on Hawaii. Alfons L. Korn, to whom we are already indebted for other major contributions to Hawaiian history, has produced an excellent translation. His slips are only minor ones. One recognizes the ghost of a French sentence behind almost every English one; but perhaps that is no bad thing.

NEW TITLES

THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
EDITED BY BRIAN MORRIS

The only authoritative text of *The Taming of the Shrew* in the First Folio (1623), and upon this the present edition is based, taking into account the emendations proposed by later editors from Hovell to the present day. The vexed question of the relationship between *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) is discussed at length, and this gives rise to consideration of the dates at which each was written, leading to an earlier dating for *The Shrew* than has hitherto been proposed. Shakespeare's authorship of the play is established, and new suggestions are made about its probable sources in folklore and Italian comedy. The commentary seeks to elucidate the various problems, lexical, interpretative, theatrical and literary, which the play presents, and the critical introduction, beginning with an account of the text's history at the hands of the eighteenth-century 'adaptors', offers an account of the play's structure, themes and style which releases it from the category of farce and establishes it as a brilliantly wrought comedy on the age-old theme of the battle between the sexes.

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This edition provides full commentary and apparatus at the foot of each page of text; while the appendices offer further discussion of difficult passages and reproduce lines which are unique either to the Folio or to the Quarto.

396 pages
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Making things well

By Frances Spalding

MALCOLM YORKE:

Eric Gill
Mas of Flesh and Spirit
304pp. Constable. £12.50.
0 09 463740 7

The revival of craft in the high-tech age proves that William Morris's battle with the machine was not as finally lost as it once seemed. Eric Gill argued that handicraft methods would not die out because they met an inherent, indelible need in human nature. In the last decade a craftsman emerging from the Royal College was more likely to disappear into the Cotswolds than into industry. But if the craft revival is to stay, so too are the often invidious effects of the machine. Goods of high quality may be more widely available but Morris's wish is still unfulfilled: "We are waiting for what must be the work, not the leisure and taste of a few scholars, authors and artists, but of the necessities and aspirations of the workmen throughout the civilized world." Gill hoped and laboured for the same. Michael Yorke, in his excellent reassessment of the artist, constantly reminds us that the issues which exercised Gill are still unresolved today.

It is tempting to regard Gill as an anachronism, a throwback to the nineteenth century in the unholy era of the first machine age. He looked like a medieval craftsman crossed with a monk for he never wore trousers but dressed in a loose-fitting, belted smock. Beneath this protruded his knee-length silk underpants, which matched in colour his scarlet socks. As he intended, his garb marked him out from the drab uniform representative of an anonymous society. He despised the "Daily-Mail mind" and much else in twentieth-century Britain, and though he executed sculpture for BBC's Broadcasting House, he forbade the wireless in his own home. Like Pugin, he looked back admiringly to the Gothic Middle Ages through as Dr Yorke points out, a pre-Raphaelite or Puginian haze, forgetting medieval corruption and censorship and finding in life "Christian, normal and human". He observed that art was then the making of whatever needed making. By contrast the artist in the twentieth century, with its rabid commercialism and self-expression, had become either a mere lap-dog to the rich or an indulgent, reclusive, cultivating private eccentricities.

In Gill's one-eyed view, two things had begun this decline: capitalism and the Renaissance, that glorious attack of high fever. For him, Christ was an end not a beginning, and the logical outcome of increasing verismilitude was the devaluation of art into the picture postcard or photograph. He regretted the separation of the artist from the craftsman and thought it degrading for the artist to be released from all necessity of producing something useful. Yet what the artist does retain, which the man at the conveyor belt does not, is total responsibility for the making. The artist is therefore envied, the individuality of his work overvalued. It becomes rare or extreme, while his audience dwindles to an educated or cultivated elite. Yorke, pursuing Gill's line of thought, argues:

Museums are now the only places where an artist and a workman might meet, and there are no shortages of museums, as the capitalists and governments of our industrial nations are willing to finance any amount of this kind of cultural charity to save their consciences for robbing the worker of any outlet for his sense of beauty in the course of his daily work. If you are to regard a nation's culture as something made and consumed to leisure time, then, writes Gill, "to hell with culture as a thing added like a sauce to otherwise unpalatable state fish".

Gill called himself a stone cutter, emphasizing his usefulness in the art which he felt made his reputation. He alone in his profession, he wrote, "was not to his directions by assistants or by the hand of an over-zealous

never lacked work, though he shunned the London art world, moving to Ditchling in Sussex in 1907 after the birth of his second daughter. There he and his wife rediscovered certain domestic traditions and adopted the rule "never buy what you can make". He was eventually joined by the calligrapher Edward Johnston, the sculptor Desmond Chute and the printer Hilary Pepler, and the "Ditchling community" began. In 1918 Gill, Pepler and Chute were invested as novices in the Third Order of St Dominic, and from then on work and worship intermingled. Gill's religion (he had been converted to Catholicism in 1913) further deepened his artistic beliefs. "Work is sacred, leisure is secular," he declared, believing like Morris that nothing made should be a joy to both the maker and the user. He hoped others would abandon "individualistic domesticity" for the unified poverty of a community like his. As Dr Yorke astutely remarks: "That the majority of workmen actually wanted a life more like that of their capitalist masters did not occur to Gill (who knew no factory workers at all) until towards the end of his life."

An enthusiast, he was easily led but congratulated himself on the choice of his leaders. One of these was Edward Johnston, whose calligraphy classes at the Central School had first awakened Gill's interest in lettering. Johnston devoted a series of lectures to the inscription on Trajan's Column, and after twelve talks had reached the letter "C". In 1906, Gill travelled to Rome to study the inscription at first hand but never slavishly copied its example, adding to his Roman letters the serif which is a distinguishing mark of a chiseled letter. But with Edward Johnston he also helped popularize the "sans serif" or block-letter form, today ubiquitously used on railway stations or wherever there is a need for maximum clarity. Gill later transferred this style into typography, which, since his invention, had imitated the handwriting of the calligrapher, maintaining the variation in thickness produced by the pen. Certain of Gill's sans serif printing types adopt a line of unvarying thickness. These are best suited for captions, as in lengthy texts the absence of serifs, which help the eye across the page, creates "vertical slip".

His eleven type designs prove that he was not opposed to the machine in itself, which could, he said, produce "the beauty of bees", but to the way it enslaved and demeaned workers. He was attracted to wood engraving because the artist was responsible for the entire production; there was no division of labour between designer and engraver. He could do anything he wanted in this medium, controlling the lights and darks with dazzling skill, the discipline of the technique sharpening his designs. Nor are they emotionally cold, as certain of Gill's critics declared, for the quaint poses, reminiscent of medieval art, are both elegant and affecting. Moreover in his work for Pepler's St Dominic's Press and for the Golden Cockerel Press he blended image and text with great invention.

These engravings also represent an outpouring of his religious and sexual beliefs. Introduced by Anglo-Catholicism to Hindu art and its frank portrayal of sexual acts, Gill afterwards aimed at a synthesis of "Ajanta and Chantres". He used an image of naked copulation to symbolize Christ's love for his Church, and his illustration of *The Song of Songs* around a Catholic controversy in his own character, which is only brought by time, experience and continuous exposure to the figures themselves and the posters, magazines and prints of the period. His previous volume, *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure*, was dedicated to the unknown potters of Staffordshire, many of whom died young of lead poisoning or silicosis. Between them the two books now form an imposing tribute to the last of the English folk-art.

Staffordshire Pottery, the Tribal Art of England first examines the roots from which Victorian portra-

thought the sculpture "noble" but criticized Gill's gliding of the necklace, finding in that detail a hint of puerility.

Gill's strong sexuality was one of the two forces that formed the content of his art. Michael Yorke deals frankly with the artist's erotica. Fascinated by public hair and genitals, Gill left a whole folder of drawings in which the male organ is shown from front, side view and in elevation, its measurements recorded and the owner's initials pencilled in. He drew female nudes in poses that exposed their pudenda, and when he showed a series of these to some friends, John Rothenstein broke the shocked silence by asking who the sister had been: "The Deputy Librarian of High Wycombe," Gill replied. Like Stanley Spencer, he wanted to believe that all sexual desire is holy and was prepared to misread, over-select or ignore aspects of Catholic teaching in order to prove it. It was said of him that after conversion he thought of everything in terms of sex, even religion. "The excess of amorous nature fertilizes the spiritual field," he declared. He saw that all freedoms are interconnected and therefore related the Puritan oppression of sex to the oppression caused by industrialism. By portraying sexual matters, he saw himself helping "to destroy the morality which is corrupting us all".

Gill's nude drawings, with their fringes of shadow suggesting shallow relief, are as finely chiselled as his sculptures and stone inscriptions. Like Blake, he sought the homely line that banishes chafes. All the parts had to be round, firm, flowing, clear and clean (his epitaph). Dr Yorke finds these odes some of the finest drawings produced this century, but with this few critics in the past have agreed. One irritating mannerism is Gill's emphatic touching of the nude's outline, the black mark lingering on parts like an obsessive caress. Yorke remarks that Gill, despite his medieval view of women, creates entirely subversive to men, frequently being associated with male virility, is here "obscured" before the sex he despised. But the drawings suggest otherwise. The woman's head is often left vacant or cut off by the edge of the paper, her body licked into position by an unfurling line. These drawings are surely as much about possession as the erotic photographs that Gill collected. They bleakly expose his want of human sympathy. In the same way his autobiography exposes his lack of respect for his wife. ("I had £15 in hand; a table, some chairs and a few knives and forks and the top bar I



"Clothes as churches and town halls", a wood engraving by Eric Gill for *Clothes*. An Essay upon the Nature and Significance of the Natural and Artificial Integuments worn by Men and Women, 1931, one of several essays by Gill on the subject of clothes and the need to dress rationally and with dignity. The picture is taken from Malcolm Yorke's *Eric Gill: Man of Flesh and Spirit*, which is reviewed here.

was married in. I also had a wife ...") Yorke does not extend our knowledge of Mary Gill, who remains a silent, unusually patient background figure.

Much else about Gill can irritate. Lady Rothenstein regretted his "harsh and unsuitable clarity" and his "arbitrarily opinionated and aggressive intellect". His prose is turgid and repetitive and his argument often oversimplified. His ideas were drawn from others, chiefly from Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris and Blake. As he himself admitted, his knowledge of history was poor and, as Yorke demonstrates, his political thinking was impractical and naive. He wrote fifty-five books and pamphlets, yet as a writer struck D. H. Lawrence as "like a tiresome, uneducated workman arguing in a pub." Yet respect for what Gill achieved and tried to achieve continues to grow. In 1980, Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery mounted the show "Strict Delight" which looked at all aspects of his work, and several of his rarely seen sculptures were shown more recently at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. This book warms interest into liking

perhaps because Michael Yorke's broad and humorous impartiality mellowed Gill's fanaticism and egotism. One is also seduced by the book's layout and presentation, which even Gill could surely not have faulted.

Herbert Read was of the opinion that Gill's life and philosophy would outlive his work. He aspired towards integration, of matter with spirit, of the artist with society, moving towards Blake's Gates of Paradise through "Mutual Forgiveness of each vice". He hoped communities like those he started at Ditchling, then at Capel-y-fyn, and finally at Piggotts, would mushroom; and that the workers would rise up and demand the right to make fewer but better goods. But as Yorke wryly comments, "the slow deliberating making of a thing to last for generations seems irrelevant to people who may have no future". Gill, however, thought he was only a beginning, that it would take several generations to effect "a reasonable, decently traditional working". He told this to David Jones who Yorke concludes, "thought he did not sound very hopeful".

Glazing the natives

By Dennis Silk

ANTHONY OLIVER:
Staffordshire Pottery
The Tribal Art of England
177pp. Heinemann. £25.
0 434 54392 6

Anthony Oliver's very readable book has all the advantages and few of the disadvantages of being unashamedly biased in a field where subjective judgments must abound. He declares his hand at once: "It is a love story, and no one loves without prejudice." Silencing Aladdin's cave of a shop in Church Street, Kensington, visiting Staffordshire museums and collectors of Staffordshire ware he has absorbed that deep knowledge of his subject which is only brought by time, experience and continuous exposure to the figures themselves and the posters, magazines and prints of the period. His previous volume, *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure*, was dedicated to the unknown potters of Staffordshire, many of whom died young of lead poisoning or silicosis. Between them the two books now form an imposing tribute to the last of the English folk-art.

Staffordshire Pottery, the Tribal Art of England first examines the roots from which Victorian portra-

figures grew. Oliver explores the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries swiftly and perceptively, paying due tribute to those Staffordshire Salt Glaze potters whose distinctive few groups and dappled glazes were the harbingers of the work of the Wood family of Burslem. "A group of Ralph Wood figures can look depressingly like the out-patients department at a hyperthyroid clinic" - thus his briefly analyses them, acknowledging their importance as a staging post but depicting their pseudo-classical gentility and lack of vitality.

There is an excellent section on Walton, the important potter who first, Oliver says, "turned his back on the gentilities of the late eighteenth century. He preferred the world about him to the world of myth and legends. His farmers and their women were working in real fields only a few miles from his factory in Burslem, not floating around in diaphanous draperies among the meadows of Elysium." Walton lives as vividly in these pages does the crisp boogie of his well-illustrated figures. And the ensuing chapter on Obadiah Sherratt, the Master of Burslem, is similarly good. Having dismissed Josiah Wedgwood as a "cold and impersonal" maker of figures, more like a confectioner than a potter, an ice-cream cake,

than a moulder of native clay". Oliver proceeds to extol Sherratt - "maker of wonderful figures and groups, where bulls roared and wives screamed at drunken husbands" - as the first potter to commit truthfully to his social scene.

The chapter on animals serves as a commentary on the way to which the Victorian city-dwelling borders derived their fun and excitement - particularly the trade fairs, with their trained animals, menageries and showmen. One of the pleasures of this book is the richness of the social history so intricately bound up with its material. The Staffordshire potters were providing people not only with decorative ornaments, but with ways of remembering their heroes and heroines, their villains and their moralizers. Few conflicts provided more of these commemorative figures than the Crimean War, and Anthony Oliver, with his particular interest in naval figures, is quick to point out the way in which the sailors predominated.

The book will have a wider appeal than to collectors of Staffordshire; it is copiously and beautifully illustrated. Its sentences, often lacking the main verbs which a pedantic schoolmaster might require, nonetheless have a freshness which stems from the confidence of real knowledge.

GEORGE M. MARSDEN:
Fundamentalism and American Culture
The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925
320pp. Oxford University Press.
£11.50.
0 19 502 758 2

Few people have gathered together in their minds the vastness, intensity and oddity of American religion. America is repellent and moving, advanced and backward, familiar and incredible, naive and sophisticated, litigious and lawless, innocent and corrupt, scrupulous and brutal, and above all - pious and profligate. Of course, it all depends where you are. In California there is less piety, more profligacy and a greater proliferation of cults. Indeed, piety thins out all along the Pacific coast. The Churches of the western seaboard are barely two-and-a-half times as strong as the Churches in Britain. But in Utah, on the adjacent time band, the religious pious enfold ninety per cent of the available sheep. In roughly the next time band, in Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Mississippi and Louisiana, the Churches claim some three quarters of the population as members. According to the most recent Gallup Poll, about half of the youngest adult age group in America worships on any given Sunday, even though their religious knowledge is often pretty exiguous.

Works-like J. Russell Hale's *The Unchurched* (Harper and Row, 1980) and the revised 1976 edition of E. S. Gausstad's *American Atlas of Religion in America* coalesce to have a panoramic view of an amazing variety and dynamism. The mood's eye has to dilate beyond our own flat and circumscribed single vision to take in a curved superannua almost without margin. You have to brood over the surface curvature of America, piecing together an ecology of place-name and architectural presence. You must travel all the way from St John's Episcopal Church or a French Cathedral in shady Georgian Savannah to a neat white kirk overlooking the Pacific at Cape Mendocino. You have to get used to thousands of cool-columned Baptist churches housing hot old-time religion - black and white. You have to visualize the Korean Methodist Church in downtown San Francisco, the Armenian cathedral in 31st Street, New York, the Bahai Temple by Lake Michigan, the tiny Pentecostal by the black crosses above white menstic walls in the Spanish south-west. You have to stand recollecting your own genealogy in burial mounds with English names on them by Congregational churches in Maloe and Vermont. As early morning mass is being sung to a Trappist monastery in the Rockies, sleek pastors and Bible-punching heralds are getting ready to save and to operate on television.

You also have to recognize two characteristics which follow from such religious lotensities set in such immense spaces. Montana, after all, which is relatively slack in its religiosity, has the same population per square mile as England in the eighteenth century. On the one hand a vocabulary and phraseology have been developed which convey religious states of mind and atmospheres with vivid precision. On the other hand voices do not carry across the spaces. The messages keep altering as you pass from wave-length to wave-length, cut off by geographical and cultural distance. In spite of the bombardments of mass communication, you can still live by one cultural channel in a particular locality. Single-minded minds are continually reinforced and exhibit levels of certitude almost unknown in England. We do not begin to imagine what some kinds of American certainty are like until some odd manifestation hits us, or until some key group loses its acrore of direction and develops a terrifying wobble of guilt and self-scrutiny. We are vulnerable both to American faith and to loss of faith, which is why we cannot afford our ignorance: much longer. Why we are ignorant is another question. Hollywood offered an odd angle on American society. The

American intelligentsia, which sends us our key messages, counters the religiosity of the population with a proportionate agnosticism. And the BBC has kept us within a bland medium wave that excludes disruptive enthusiasms, especially American-style preaching.)

American certitudes, and the occasional terrifying psychic wobble, are a strange time-scale out of phase with our own. When you walk in Central Park or by Lakeside Chicago, the different layers measure architectural history by the decade. In much the same way, religion is measured by a sense of history which is contracted and susceptible to momentary excitement, or else just lost in huge holes covered by formulae. It is difficult to have a stable reference back; you have constantly to revolve. Most Americans cannot conceive of a clergy on the Coleridgean model, or of a national Church which runs *pari passu* with the history of a people, marking every huddle of human habitation, and weak precisely because that people has not yet imagined its real essence. Americans celebrate the formula which unhinges Church from State and for that reason no longer know what a historic tradition they have accomplished. This leaves them with an unacknowledged need, which surfaces strongly but ambiguously. John F. Wilson in *Public Religion in American Culture* (Temple University Press, 1979) traces a shadowy American anima in the shape of the national covenant and the rhetoric used by Presidents on civil occasions. An English national ceremony like the royal wedding, which marks our own stables and less formulaic sense of time, is powerful enough to get tens of millions up at three o'clock by the Pacific and at six o'clock on the eastern seaboard. Why, for that matter, is Yale more Gothic and religious than Oxford? Is it because the emplacements, like the formulae, have to be extra large and massive where the sense of continuous meaning is so evanescent?

On this scene, with its immense emplacements, ritual formulae, contracted time sense, metropolitan scepticism and unimagioable certitudes, evangelical Protestantism is the largest single element, the historic candidate. Not only is it now beginning to see whether it can reaccompany a defining role in the national persona, but it reaches out to much smaller groupings in every Protestant country. To the mid-nineteenth century, many of the pulpits sprang from Victorian England to America, through, for example, the YMCA and the YWCA, and the Keswick Convention, but now the predominant traffic flows from the American centre. The impact is already quite strong in England and Holland, and identifiable even in countries like New Zealand, Sweden and Finland. It is arguably part of a firming up of the religious profile, which is already in train in the Roman Catholic Church, which is brutally evident in Islam, and which under certain circumstances can sharply interact with a reassessment of national confidence. Indeed, Roland Robertson has argued that the fundamentalism of Iran and of the United States should be viewed together in an international and global context where nations need to find their souls.

That is the size and potential of the phenomenon of fundamentalism, meaning here recovery of "fundamental" provides the hardest of most distinctive elements in blocs of national consciousness antagonistically defined on the international stage. Progressives have so far too easily dismissed recessives as foredoomed by history, which is just the kind of dogma from which they are supposed to have freed themselves. Progressives have also co-opted labels like evangelicalism, fundamentalism and (now) the moral majority, not thinking the paradoxes and varieties of these things worth scrutiny. Scholarship suggests that a more careful, less triumphantly certain look be accorded to the varied forms of conservative faith and morals. Liberal survival may depend on it.

George Marsden's mastery and lucid *Fundamentalism and American Culture* is essential reading for those

who want to understand the historical background of all the varieties of conservative faith and morals in America. Dr Marsden teaches at Calvin College, and I notice a fair sprinkle of Dutch names among the colleagues he thanks in his preface. See the tough intellectuality exemplified in this book is part of the tough intellectual strain in the tradition he describes, especially perhaps the conservative forms of high Presbyterianism which had such long and powerful influence at Princeton. That, of course, is the first shock to established liberal stereotypes, especially perhaps the kind of view nourished by Richard Hofstadter's brilliant *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. There are two other stereotypes which are shaken, though I must say not entirely displaced. One is that social reform and/or a communal concern cannot coexist with individualistic piety. The other is that this type of piety conflates God and America, whereas, in fact, America can figure both as Paradise Regained and as Babylon the Great.

Most of what fellows will be concerned with the tension between intellect and sentiment, science and know-nothingism within American evangelical Christianity, especially the conservative wing and its fundamentalist offshoots.

If we are to understand the intellectual elements which from time to time have informed fundamentalism, we need to distinguish it from a variety of adolescent and sometimes overlapping traditions. A very complicated Venn diagram would be needed to represent the overlaps of evangelical revivalism, pietism, the various holiness movements, millennialism, Baptist traditionalism, Reformed confessionalism and other orthodoxes. Of course, you can if you wish reduce the whole phenomenon sociologically to a hardened shell around a dying form of social life. But this is not Marsden's way and he points to the contemporary vitality of fundamentalism as underlining the relevance of long-term doctrinal traditions, which include late nineteenth-century millennialism teaching (especially "dispensational premillennialism") centered in Bible Institutes and Conventions, and conservative Presbyterian theology based at Princeton. Indeed, biblical inerrancy as formulated by scholars in this latter-day Geneva was parallel to papal inerrancy as formulated in Rome.

The roots of what we see, and perhaps fear, today lie in the period immediately following the Civil War, when evangelical Protestantism was still confident and dominant. The tradition continued through a multiplicity of divisions and mental agonies up to the tensions between aggressive liberal modernists and evangelicals which came to a climax after the First World War. Everyone knows the fundamentalist defeat dramatized in 1925 by the Scopes ("Monkey") Trial at Dayton, Tennessee. But, unlike so many of their liberal opponents, the defeated party understood the corporate roots of belief and they retired to build a powerful sub-culture which has now re-emerged. Unfortunately, the peremptory dismissal of the conservatives at Dayton operates in our minds like the equally notorious dismissal of Bishop Wilberforce by Huxley at the British Association. We now understand fundamentalism simply as the losing side in a contest between intellectuals and scientists and the benighted inhabitants of Hixsville. Not so, says Dr Marsden.

Of course, fundamentalism does include an intense, self-sustaining thrust. Certainly this reviewer's scrutiny of what that thrust has been to work out a version of Edmund Gosse's classic *Father and Son* two generations later. The family encyclopedia still shows the section on the origin of the universe scored out by a youthful hand for contradicting Genesis. But the point is that evangelical culture often encouraged the buying of encyclopedias and could embody a profound regard for learning. The worst agony grew out of this regard, together with a respect for decades' worth of the evangelical family, which made open repudiation a rending horror. The

sociology of religion is littered with academics scorched in this particular fire.

Marsden, who may well have undergone his own trials, points to a profound respect for science and rationality growing out of a Baconian emphasis on careful observation and the classification of facts. This Baconianism was wedded to a variant of Scottish Common Sense Realism which argued that facts can be plainly apprehended. Hypotheses were regarded as merely speculative. So the clash which today has the appearance of ignorance against sophistication derived a century or more ago from a classic conflict of paradigms in the Kuhnian sense. Moreover, the defeated paradigm, like the sub-culture it represented, has regrouped its resources and initiated a critique of the presuppositions of Darwinism. "Creationism" is currently taken seriously, at least in some of its restatements. Of course, the offshoots have often been richly ludicrous, especially when the emphasis on factuality coalesces with Biblical literalism. One of the most painfully funny examples was produced by the evangelical Keeper of the London Zoo. He described in precise and expert detail the problems faced by Noah in the Ark when he had to cope with feeding and heating and the segregated accommodation of all the available species, aided doubtless by a special augmentation of divine wisdom. For many evangelicals, including revivalists like Reuben Torrey, the Bible became an encyclopedic puzzle, in which beauty and expressive power were entirely subordinate to pedantic clarity and flat exercises in ingenious intelligence.

The virtuous scientism of some evangelicals and their reductive empiricism was conjoined with an optimistic approach which occluded the traditional Calvinist stress on the corruption of the intelligence by the Fall. Such lack of saving doubt was very American and led to a celebration of the American Eden, sheltering "true religion and unspiced" against a higher criticism unfaded in corrupt and sceptical Europe. All the same, the serpentine intrusion of the new paradigm had to be scotched, or at least accommodated, without fatal damage. Conservative Christian intellectuals therefore distinguished between a process of development under divine governance and one based on blind fate which "knows no end and adepts no means".

The intellectual crisis deepened once their common sense ceased to be common and when what was so obvious to them became equated with the bizarre. One way out was to emphasize a division of spheres between historical or scientific truths and the spiritual truths of religious experiences. Protes-

tants like Henry Ward Beecher of Boston could expand this approach to take in romantic ideas revealed in Nature: truths of the heart and sentiment, the work of "imagination" and "sublimity". What made such shifts palatable to many Americans was the commitment shared by all the protagonists to morality. The identification of theological liberalism with a "new morality" was not yet such as to add moral to theological antagonism.

The seeds of the 1920s debate were probably generated during the ascendancy of D. L. Moody, whom Marsden regards as the principal begetter of fundamentalism. The Moody ambience combined the holiness movement, premillennialism and biblical infallibility, to which was joined a pragmatic dialectic of internecine combat and denominationalism. Moody's base was the interdenominational Y.M.C.A. He was the key figure in conferences and conventions on the influential Keswick model, devoted to holiness and the Holy Spirit, and doing social "service for Christ". In Moody there was an individual piety, which however much it might issue in strenuous works of charity, contrasted with the organic communitarian and reformist concerns of much Protestantism in the earlier part of the century, as exemplified in (say) Charles Finney and an Oberlin theology. There was also a certain asceticism illustrated in the hymns of his collaborator Ira D. Sankey. Nevertheless Moody and Sankey together claimed to have rescued half a million souls from hell in their visits to England, and their Sacred Songs and Solos came to rest on thousands of harmoniums in English chapels and parlours.

In all these varied aspects, Marsden discerns a basic ambivalence, extending to the question of what place was properly assigned to the intellect. He sums it up by saying that sometimes the advocates of fundamentalism

were backward looking and reactionary, at other times they were imaginative innovators. On some occasions they appeared militant and divisive; on others they were warm and irenic. At times they seemed ready to forsake the whole world over to a point of doctrine; at other times they appeared heedless of tradition in their zeal to win converts. Sometimes they were optimistic patriots; sometimes they were prophetic shaking from their feet the dust of a doomed civilization.

What remains especially interesting is that in all the persistent contradictions of Calvinist rigour and pietist or Methodist Arminianism, the latter element coped most easily with the intellectual crisis. Methodist

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MINOR

"heart-work" could be transmuted into an emphasis on religious experience and thence into "feelings". The sheer intellectuality and sophistication of the Calvinist wing helped bring about the denouement of the 1920s. The sufferings of the Presbyterian intelligentsia, exhibited in such different figures as Benjamin Warfield and J. Gresham Machen, are highly instructive. There were, of course, other strands within Presbyterianism. William Jennings Bryan was torn apart along a rather different axis. His old-time religion held that the gospel was building up the immanent Kingdom of God in America and that America was the pre-eminent example of how Christianity was the inspiration of civilization the world over. So when America started to desert the source of its greatness, his whole position was threatened. Billy Sunday, the evangelist, was even simpler in his approach and mixed his do-it-yourself Gospel with the traditional American virtues of decency, minifines, patriotism, thrift, sobriety and hard work. Bryan, the post-millennialist and Sunday, the pre-millennialist, were united in the 1920s through their last stand for the identity of America and Christian civilization.

Whereas Bryan, God's inscrutable election became populist electioneering in God's very own American Zion, in Billy Sunday the grave denouement of the 1920s became a wheedling, hearty exhortation. Cut-away coats and wing-collars gave way to shirt-sleeves and to the entertaining emotionalism purveyed by Bible students nicknamed "Bobs", "Buds", "Cyclones", "Gypsies" and "Joes". While Reuben Torrey disdained "the amusement competition", Billy Sunday gloried in it. An intellectual like Gresham Machen was equally repelled

both by Sunday's corybantic Christianity and by Bryan's identification of the Kingdom of God with the progress of America.

The tensions within Presbyterianism derived not only from the tenacious grasp of an older paradigm, but from the development of organizational machinery for dealing with differences, and from the role of explicit statements, like the Westminster Confession. In this Presbyterianism was less flexible than the Baptists. Moreover, the Presbyterian ethos was partly an expression of that Scottish and Scottish inheritance to which the English are so ill attuned, especially as manifested in Ulster. The memorization of the 107 answers of the Shorter Catechism was ordinarily completed by the age of six. This deposit of dogma, inculcated from youth upward, meant that as late as 1910 the Presbyterian General Assembly adopted a five-point declaration of orthodox concerning miracles, the atonement, the Virgin Birth, the bodily resurrection and biblical inerrancy, which provided a last rallying-point for the 1920s. And alongside this appeared the Scofield Reference Bible, published by OUP in 1909.

So the scene was set for the showdown in Dnytnn. The world war was the preliminary testing time, erasing in some believers a doubt about the whole moral course of civilization, and in others a certainty of its rightness. An enthusiastic endorsement of the war as the way America might inaugurate the Kingdom. The first skirmish was fought in the schools before the great confrontation in the courts. Bryan, peace advocate, populist, sometime Presidential candidate, dented Elihu's mantle to face Clarence Darrow and all the cosmopolitan prophets of

Baal over the teaching of evolution in school by John Scopes. H. L. Mencken in his classic comments on the trial expanded the negative characterization of fundamentalism to include every aspect of American rural or small-town Protestantism. Out of that defeat came withdrawal and some of the elements in the "paranoid style" so well described by Hofstadter.

The victory of agnostic cosmopolitan liberalism was complemented by the victory of theological liberalism within the mainstream churches. The result was that conservative evangelicalism withdrew from an apostate America and from the kind of social gospel associated with aggressive theological liberalism. The ambivalences of conservatism toward culture, intellect and social reform began to resolve themselves in a phase of pietistic retreat.

This is the end of Dr Marsden's brilliant, lucid and learned account but not the conclusion of the matter for contemporary America. After all, the Space Age Museum in Washington warns visitors that nothing therein should be taken as contradicting Hely Writ. Moreover, it is just as complex a scene today as he describes in the late nineteenth century. One cannot equate fundamentalism, evangelicalism and the moral majority. One cannot assume that a right-wing stance is inevitable, since in other parts of the world the same phenomenon is politically volatile. One cannot guess how far practices like faith healing and exorcism will continue to penetrate even the liberal mainstream. It is certain only that here we have a cautionary tale, important both for the defective social theory of liberals, and their continued survival. They should read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Dr Marsden's book.

Ancestral austerities

By J. A. Thompson

MICHAEL J. DEVINE:
John W. Foster
Politics and Diplomacy in the Imperial Era, 1873-1917
187pp. Ohio University Press. £9.30.
0 8214 0437 7

In the 1950s, State Department aides apparently became accustomed to the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, interrupting discussions of strategy by remarking that "my grandfather had something to say on that subject", and then reading aloud from one of the worn old volumes always placed near his desk. The truth was that Dulles owed much more than his name to his grandfather and predecessor as Secretary of State. John W. Foster seems always to have had a soft spot for his eldest grandson, who had been born in his house in Washington in 1888. He took the boy on fishing expeditions on the shores of Lake Ontario, and later financed a post-graduate year of study at the Sorbonne for the young man, arranged for him to act as secretary to the Chinese delegation to the Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907, and got him his job in the Wall Street law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell by an unashamed exploitation of an old association. Foster was also largely responsible for the career of his son-in-law, Robert Lansing, who himself represented a "new departure" - again largely rests on the activities of the Harrison administration, particularly in naval building programme and abortive attempts to acquire Hawaii and various naval bases. But the thesis that "the imperial impulse of 1898 was in large measure a result of the 'imperial' diplomacy of the Harrison administration" has its accompaniment the awkward fact that both Harrison and Foster opposed the acquisition of the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other overseas territories inhabited by peoples they considered unfit for self-government.

Perhaps, after all, it is through his descendants that Foster's career achieves its wider significance. The earnest Presbyterian, whose letters to his wife during the Civil War were full of instructions on the running of the Sunday School he had founded and who, "much to the consternation of the diplomatic community in Mexico City", served only "tea and light refreshments" in the US legation, must have been and John Hay's combative negotiator - "Foster's worst enemy would never accuse him of any tendency to mercy or tenderness to an opponent" - would have aroused wry smiles among many diplomats in the 1950s. If John Foster Dulles did inherit from his grandfather more than the same office in the Senate Office Building, this would have been the only respect in which the American government has exhibited remarkable continuity with the nineteenth century. The face of the dramatically greater challenges presented by a radically new environment.

Foster's own period as Secretary of State was much shorter than that of either Lansing or Dulles - just nine months in 1892-93, about half of them in a lame-duck administration. But, as Michael J. Devine's study shows, there was a good deal more to his career than this brief episode. The son of a leading citizen of Evansville, Indiana, had been a pioneer in his day. John Foster grew up, a strict Presbyterian and anti-slavery Republican in a border district. He enlisted in the Union Army in 1861 at the age of twenty-five, and finished the war as a brigadier-general. Returning to Indiana as a lawyer and newspaper publisher, he became chairman of the Republican state central committee in 1872. Following Grant's election victory, Foster immediately sold his interest in the Evansville Daily Journal and journeyed to Washington, where his patron, Senator Morton, instructed him to take his pick from the "Blue Book", or register of federal offices. Conscious of his deficiencies as a diplomat - he had never been abroad and spoke no foreign language - Foster requested appointment as Minister to Switzerland, which he judged "one of the lowest and most unimportant of the diplomatic posts". But this desirable posting was already promised and Foster, slightly to his alarm, was offered Mexico - "the highest and most difficult mission in the American hemisphere".

His success as Minister to Mexico (1873-80), where he not only deftly handled diplomatic matters but, unlike previous American ministers, learned Spanish and travelled widely, laid the basis for Foster's future career. After a brief spell in St Petersburg (which he found too exotically "Oriental") he returned to Washington, where he made his living as a lawyer, with several foreign governments among his clients, and served successive administrations as a special envoy and unofficial adviser. In the administration of Benjamin Harrison (1889-93), Foster departed for the alluring James G. Blaine in international negotiations long before succeeding him as Secretary of State. After leaving office, Foster served for six months as counsel to Foster returned to the Shimonoseki peace conference following the Sino-Japanese war. He later became a rather conservative pillar of the peace movement in the United States before the First World War, thereby attracting the wrath of Theodore Roosevelt.

This is the first biography that has been written of Foster, and it is not a long book. This is no doubt due to the fact that, after completing his two volumes of *Diplomatic Memoirs* in 1909, Foster destroyed his voluminous papers, with the exception of "two thin boxes containing only letters to him of a complimentary nature". Devine has found several of Foster's letters in other manuscript collections and used these, as well as State Department records and published material, to produce a study that throws new light on some aspects of his career. One of these is the Chilean crisis of 1891-92 where, apparently on the basis of a hostile account by John Bassett Moore of the State Department, Devine seems to agree with the charge made by Foster's contemporary critics that his attempts to combine acting as foreign ruler with advising the American government involved a clash of interests. If Foster is generally seen from the outside in these pages, that is doubtless largely his own fault.

Unfortunately, Devine is not content "to review the details" of Foster's career, but feels impelled to claim that he was an "extremely influential figure" and that his record "demonstrates clearly the continuity in the evolution of American foreign policy from Ulysses S. Grant to Woodrow Wilson". Neither of these claims seems really justified. Foster was only involved in central policymaking during the Harrison administration and, even then, it is clear that all significant decisions were made by the President himself. The argument for continuity - explicitly contrasted with the view that 1898 represented a "new departure" - again largely rests on the activities of the Harrison administration, particularly in naval building programme and abortive attempts to acquire Hawaii and various naval bases. But the thesis that "the imperial impulse of 1898 was in large measure a result of the 'imperial' diplomacy of the Harrison administration" has its accompaniment the awkward fact that both Harrison and Foster opposed the acquisition of the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other overseas territories inhabited by peoples they considered unfit for self-government.

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LAZAR FLEISHMAN:
Boris Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody (Boris Pasternak in the Twenties)
314pp. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag. £19.25.
3 7705 1949 3

Pasternak's first autobiography, *A Safe Conduct* (1929-31), is notorious for a difficult work, much in the way of Mandelstam's novella, *The Egyptian Stamp*, written a little earlier. As Michel Aucuturrier pointed out, in a notable paper at the Coriary-la-Salle symposium on Pasternak in 1975, it observes the poetic mode of Pasternak's prose fiction in the 1920s. The argument, elusive and at times highly philosophical, is presented through a somewhat elliptical series of scenes and images or by generic statement; and - a discovery to which Lazar Fleishman makes handsome tribute, since it provided the inspiration of his own book - *A Safe Conduct* has to be read on two levels. When Pasternak writes about the artist in the police state of sixteen-century Venice, he is implying his own situation in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s.

With an admirable command of detail, Professor Fleishman follows the path of Pasternak through a decade which near its close was already overshadowed by the terror of the 1930s. Yury Zhigrov in Pasternak's novel is made to die, gasping for breath in a Moscow train, on one of the last days of August 1929, just where two prominent writers, Pilyay and Zamyatin, were being persecuted for the new crime of publishing their work abroad. The last five of Pasternak's twelve closely argued chapters are given to the elucidation of *A Safe Conduct*, which arises out of his author's experience in the ten-year decade and defines his position, enabling him to face firmly the still more arduous trials ahead.

Pasternak and Mayakovsky, Pasternak and LEB, the "Left Front of the Arts" with which Mayakovsky and the belis of Futurism sought to dominate Soviet culture - these are the concerns which provide a focus for the impressive erudition of Fleishman's study. Pasternak as a young poet had been enraptured by Mayakovsky. None the less, the book that brought him an unwelcome celebrity in 1922, *My Sister Life* (his poems about the revolution, summer of 1917), had unmistakably its own voice, one that was increasingly appealing to Mayakovsky. Pasternak fled briefly to Berlin, but decided that the huge Russian colony there was "characterless" in comparison with Soviet Russia, where the publishing of poetry had started again with volumes by Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam, Khodasevich and many others. Fleishman applies to him the comment that Mandelstam had made on Chadaev, the outspoken critic of Russian society, isolated from Western Christendom and its civilization, a hundred years earlier. Chadaev like Pasternak had gone back after seeing the West, and Mandelstam remarks:

I think that a country and a people have justified themselves if they have produced one wholly free man who has wanted and been able to use his freedom.

Pasternak used his without hesitation. On returning, at once he alleged himself with LEB, writing for its journal a poem to celebrate May Day 1923 (which he never put into print again). But his relationship with LEB - and with Mayakovsky - was not at all satisfactory. On both sides suspicion prevailed. The two poets could not admire each other's work at this time, though remaining deeply conscious of former loyalties. Pasternak thought poorly of Mayakovsky's agitational poems; Mayakovsky did not in his heart care for Pasternak's attempts at revolutionary epic, *Nineteen Hundred and Five* and *Love and Liberty*. And Pasternak came very close to seeing LEB as a group of essays in the debate about abolition - the relation between the slave trade and New World demographic and cultural trends.

The "social demand", as understood by Aseev, required that the writer should deal only with socially valuable facts. Another in the group, Tsvetkov, went on to the inevitable conclusion that poetry ought to be replaced by documentary prose. In

The artist in opposition

By Henry Gifford

by Rilke, to whose memory *A Safe Conduct* is dedicated. He realized that the logic of LEB's development would prove fatal to Mayakovsky. This showed at the very first conference of LEB, when a leading member proposed that it should be their role to carry out party directives. Both Mayakovsky and his associate Aseev, a poet who had also been a close friend of Pasternak, opposed this recommendation, pointing forward as it did to the practice of the Union of Soviet Writers, inaugurated in 1934. But Pasternak was convinced that they too shared the false premises on which this view rested, and ignoring its actual advocate, he described Mayakovsky and Aseev in a letter to Mandelstam as "poor, weak knights tearing from humiliation to humiliation for the glory of their unknown and altogether unwanted lady".

Fleishman observes that Pasternak often baffled contemporaries by his disregard of tactical considerations and his refusal to compromise. This led him to take a stand quite inconsistent with what might have been expected. Mandelstam and Akhmatova were not in error when they believed him to be their natural ally, though it would need time for Pasternak to declare himself. On Fleishman's showing he was remarkably clear-sighted, and the apparently bizarre pattern of his thinking had its own strict logic.

Thus in 1925 he wrote a surprisingly extravagant essay on the merits of Kruchenykh, the Futurist master of *zanyu* or "metalegic", with whom he had never been in sympathy, and against whose example Mayakovsky was then warning responsible revolutionary poets. Only LEB, Mayakovsky maintained, with its "rational organization" could do the task for which the "chaotic procedures" of Futurism were unfit, namely to reflect "the aspirations and work" of the Soviet Union. Pasternak admired Kruchenykh just because he had remained an unyielding Futurist, and was thus exempt from the banality that LEB promissed.

In July of that year the Caetral Committee intervened in the dispute between RAPP, the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, and the "yellow-trailers". Pasternak, who was then a young poet had been enraptured by Mayakovsky. None the less, the book that brought him an unwelcome celebrity in 1922, *My Sister Life* (his poems about the revolution, summer of 1917), had unmistakably its own voice, one that was increasingly appealing to Mayakovsky. Pasternak fled briefly to Berlin, but decided that the huge Russian colony there was "characterless" in comparison with Soviet Russia, where the publishing of poetry had started again with volumes by Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam, Khodasevich and many others. Fleishman applies to him the comment that Mandelstam had made on Chadaev, the outspoken critic of Russian society, isolated from Western Christendom and its civilization, a hundred years earlier. Chadaev like Pasternak had gone back after seeing the West, and Mandelstam remarks:

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The "social demand", as understood by Aseev, required that the writer should deal only with socially valuable facts. Another in the group, Tsvetkov, went on to the inevitable conclusion that poetry ought to be replaced by documentary prose. In

his second autobiography, written in the late 1950s, Pasternak shows an unironic respect for Tsvetkov's frankness in concluding, as Plato had done, that the state could not tolerate poetry. The "nightmare ideology" that had emerged from LEB greatly disturbed Pasternak. Mayakovsky's own position by 1929 was desperate. In his last months, early in 1930, he would apply Coriolanus-like for service with the Volscians by joining his temporarily vicious enemies, RAPP. Fleishman writes eloquently of Mayakovsky's predicament, when he allowed himself for all his genuineness as an artist, his ronsiously proletarian honesty, to protest outrageously that one third of the Federation of Soviet Writers was "a league of Plaisyaks".

Pasternak undertook *A Safe Conduct* so as to formulate and defend his own aesthetics against LEB and Mayakovsky. Aseev had declared "the supreme misfortune of a poet" to be "a mistake in his choice of genre". Pasternak deliberately chose a genre which was now being advocated in Mayakovsky's camp - that of the memoir, a paradoxical one for Futurists, from whom Pasternak differed in wanting "Futurism with a genealogy". *A Safe Conduct* does not follow the pattern of the usual autobiography, and later, dissatisfied with this, he wrote the second, more conventional version as a corrective to it. *A Safe Conduct* tells us its first two parts of his own search for a vocation, leading him to reject music and philosophy. But while the work was in progress, Mayakovsky to Pasternak's grief committed suicide, and the third and last part of the book might well have had a separate dedication, "To the memory of Vladimir Mayakovsky". As Aucuturrier has said, the hero of this ostensible autobiography becomes Mayakovsky, who eventually stands for the poet in general - at the end he is referred to not by name but as "the poet". The "safe conduct" Pasternak seeks is one for the imaginative mind of a poet's generation. He had written to Mayakovsky two years before that "art as a whole is tragedy", adding that "narrative it should be 'protected from catastrophes'". Mayakovsky's course from the beginning had been set for catastrophe. However, Fleishman argues that Pasternak could still protect Mayakovsky's reputation by judging his death to be heroic, and that, as a memorial poem he published in 1931 makes clear, it was really a tribute to cowardice and philistinism. The attitude to Mayakovsky in the deeply felt third part of *A Safe Conduct* is by no means simple, the tone being tragic, and eventually, along with the concealed polemic and the sense of terrible waste, embolism.

By this time the recommendations of LEB which Pasternak had been resisting were, even though LEB itself lay in ruins, the official line of the Party. To Pasternak it was plain that the artist would have to accept "risk and danger", since the practice of art always must confront him in opposition. The Party called for obedience to its directives. Pasternak in commenting on the resolution of 1925 had seen that the artist must rely on the maturity and strength of his art alone to become truly intimate with the epoch in which he lived. The Party tried to compel the epoch to "live as the embodiment of a generalization", from which springs the falsity of Socialist Realism. Fleishman distinguishes between the "juridical fixation of fact" that LEB now wanted, and the "lyrical" truth sought by Pasternak. Art exaggerates, or, in Pasternak's phrase, it "says more than is necessary" and its truths are "capable of eternal development". "Life goes forward" and the "truth" that does not take account of this process "lags behind, and deceives". This deception, unlike that of the artist to his client, is fraudulent.

Facts for Pasternak only become significant when they are treated as symbols. Hence the riddling definition he gives in *A Safe Conduct*: "Art is realistic as an activity, and

symbolic as fact". Being concerned with essence, it reveals this through particulars that are not significant in themselves: any one symbol may be exchanged for another. As a result, not all the details in *A Safe Conduct* are historically exact: for instance, as Fleishman remarks, no mention is made there of his current dispute with LEB but instead he talks of "a potential break" in 1917. And the later *Essay in Autobiography* fills in the account with other facts. *A Safe Conduct* is a difficult work to read, just as Fleishman's commentary is, since much has been expressed obliquely by Pasternak through symbol and the clue can easily be lost. It calls for very close attention, and the weight of cross-reference and exultantly footnotes in the commentary must be taken cheerfully by the reader.

I have found my initial scepticism, with memories of what Edmund Wilson and others made of *Doctor Zhivago*, overcome by Fleishman's acute responsiveness to the implications of puzzling passages. To give one example: why, after stating that Mayakovsky in the early years of their acquaintance "seldom appeared alone" but with a suite of Futurists, should Pasternak in the same paragraph add abruptly that he then saw for the first time in his life a Primus stove?

The invention did not yet give off a stink, and who thought that it would so pollute life and find for itself such wide diffusion? Fleishman seems justified in seeing a "macaronic pun" on the literal meaning of *primus* and the conception of "first poet of the age", which was the role of Mayakovsky - a different thing, as Pasternak had explained to Tsvetaeva, from being a great poet - and he himself refused it after Mayakovsky's death. The stink Fleishman interprets as referring to the "suite of Futurists", who really had grown noisome in LEB. And he notes how Mayakovsky in a poem of 1929 had proclaimed that the Primus must now give way to gas: it had become obsolete.

These are hints almost certainly slanting most readers, and they contribute to the opaqueness of *A Safe Conduct*, as the same procedure does in *The Egyptian Stamp*. None the less if all Pasternak's facts are symbolic each one has to be inspected closely. "Aesopian language" is familiar enough from Russian literature before 1917, and still flourishes in Soviet times. But Pasternak's imagination is through and through metaphorical. He is seeking for analogies, since the essence declares itself in various forms. To give one example that Fleishman, like Aucuturrier, takes to be of the first importance: Pasternak writes at some length in *A Safe Conduct* about Venice in the time of Veronese and Titian, and, speaking of the lion as emblem of Venice, he describes the *bocca del leone* into which informers dropped secret denunciations. "In time it became a mark of ill-breeding to mention people who had mysteriously failed into the beautifully moulded slot." Venice had been a police state, and great art had flourished in opposition to this.

In 1932 Pasternak heard Mandelstam read some of his later poems and said to him afterwards: "I envy you your freedom. For me you are a new Khibnikov. And just as alien to me as he is. I need non-freedom." Khibnikov had chosen the life of a wanderer, outside society, it was Pasternak's view, however, that a "flexible" State (one that is aware of history) needs opposition from its artists; and Fleishman concludes that for him art needed the opposition of the State. Pasternak's outburst to Mandelstam appears to confirm this. Eventually the State would threaten Pasternak with exile, and thereby would probably have destroyed him as a poet. But until that moment in 1958 he continued to make the best possible use of non-freedom, achieving with no loss of integrity, and certainly not unimpeded, a "safe conduct" still for the pursuit of his art.

Lazar Fleishman's elaborate study lays the foundation for a more comprehensive and distinct view of Pasternak which will come about when other periods of his life have been subjected to the same faithful scrutiny. He is more enigmatic than Mandelstam, or Akhmatova, or Tsvetaeva; his standing in Soviet literature was ambiguous; and he was able until the very end to avoid catastrophe. But Pasternak never doubted that art is tragedy; and tragedy is impossible without a hero.

Some divorces make great entertainment.



Pursuits of Happiness

The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage
Stanley Cavell

During the '30s and '40s, Hollywood produced a genre of midday comedies that emphasized the central couple after divorce or separation. And the female protagonists were strong, independent and sophisticated. Here, Stanley Cavell examines 17 of these classic movies for their cinematic techniques, and for such varied themes as feminism and masculinity, liberty and interdependence. Included are *Adam's Rib*, *Bringing Up Baby* and *The Philadelphia Story*.

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(Famous Books in Science continued)

good name but losing his credibility. His book, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, Paris, 1744-85 is open at a plate of the Quanderou, a bearded monkey uncannily like a member of the French Academy and seeming to suggest that he has himself built the hut which stands behind him. And of course Charles Darwin is here with *On the Origin of Species*, London, 1859.

For geology, really only William Smith is included, the lowly surveyor who noticed that each rock stratum contained fossils peculiar to itself, and one of whose meticulous and beautiful maps from his pioneer geological survey of Britain is displayed. Even Charles Lyell is absent, but at least *The Origin* is open at the magnificent beginning of Chapter Ten, "On the Geological Succession of Organic Beings", which makes plain Darwin's indebtedness to him.

In medicine, loosely defined, Edward Jenner is celebrated for his discovery of vaccination (the evils of which an ageing Alfred Russel Wallace was still mistakenly denouncing in *The Wonderful Century* as late as 1900) with *An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Variolae Vaccinae*, London, 1798, open at a painting of the once-fair hand of a milkmaid now postulating with cowpox; Louis Pasteur, for his bringing to birth of bacteriology, with the "Mémoire sur la fermentation appelée lactique" (1857); and Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis for his heroic insistence that the (usually fatal) puerperal fever in his Vienna maternity hospital was caused by doctors' putting their unwashed hands into women to examine them before childbirth. Semmelweis's *Die Aetiologie, der Begriffe und die Prophylaxis des Kindbettfiebers*, Budapest, Vienna and Leipzig, 1861, reports a five-sixths reduction in mortality once compulsory washing in calcium chloride solution had been introduced. Karl Ernst von Baer is remembered for his investigation of the egg mysteries of embryology; and Sigmund Freud wanders in like a bad dream with *Die Traumdeutung*, Leipzig and Vienna, 1900.

In chemistry, Joseph Priestley and Antoine Laurent Lavoisier win their places for the dismantling of the phlogiston theory, the discovery of oxygen and the formulation of the principle of the conservation of matter; and John Dalton for the atomic theory which he propounded in *A New System of Chemical Philosophy*, Manchester, 1808, but it is the physicists who dominate the closing stages of this visual bibliographical history.

Michael Faraday is remembered for his *Experimental Researches in Electricity*, London, 1839-45, in which he described his generation of electricity

by electromagnetic induction. And his demonstration that polarized light is affected by a magnetic field inspired James Clerk Maxwell towards the calculation of the four differential equations which formed the basis of the theory of electromagnetic waves, brought electricity and light within the scope of dynamics, and allowed physical phenomena to be considered in terms that were not mechanical. They also formed a ready-made framework for the results of William Konrad Roentgen's accidental discovery of X-rays, here dramatically illustrated with a photograph of the ghostly, bony interior of a colleague's hand, from "Über eine neue Art von Strahlen" 1896-97.

Three profoundly impressive papers follow: Max Planck's "Zur Theorie des Gesetzes der Energieverteilung im Normal spectrum", 1900, firstly, in which he stated that energy is emitted and absorbed, not in continuous indefinitely divisible currents but in small, discrete indivisible units or quanta - a theory which helped to explain wave-length, the specific heats of solids, the photochemical effects of light, the orbits of electrons, the wavelengths of the lines of the spectrum, X-rays, the velocity of rotating gas molecules and the distances between the particles of a crystal. Albert Einstein then shakes his great shaggy head with the simple paper "Die Grundlage der allgemeinen Relativitätstheorie" from the *Annalen der Physik* for 1916. Developing Maxwell's equations, which had correlated light and electricity and introduced fields of force to replace Newtonian theories of action-at-a-distance, Einstein set out to integrate gravity into his "physical reality" . . . thought of as represented by continuous fields, governed by partial differential equations. He concluded that matter itself is a form of energy - that a quantity of energy equals the product of mass times the square of the velocity of light. Such a theoretical astonishment can only be matched by the improbability of the final practical demonstration which succeeds it, in Ernest Rutherford's "Collision of alpha particles with Light Atoms" from *The Philosophical Magazine* for 1919. Rutherford had already discovered and named the alpha, beta and gamma particles given off by radioactive substances; here he reports that alpha particles, in collision with nitrogen atoms, liberated from them the nuclei of hydrogen atoms. Nuclear fission had finally made the alchemist's dream come true: one element had changed into another.

Boldly selected, well displayed and especially lucidly and carefully explained, this is a magnificent exhibition of the real riches, the intellectual splendours of scientific history.

In the purple

By Patricia Craig

True Confessions
Gore Cinema, Russell Square

From its punning title on, Ulu Grosbard's *True Confessions* plays neatly with ideas of Catholicism and corruption, mortal sins and mortal wounds, grace and disgrace. The story (based on a novel by John Gregory Dunne, who also wrote the screenplay in collaboration with Joan Didion) concerns two Irish-American brothers in the early post-war period, a policeman (Robert De Niro) and a politician (Robert Duval). The policeman (Robert Duval) is preoccupied with the murder of a prostitute who has ended up in two places: the priest (Robert De Niro), who is to line for promotion, understands diplomacy and expediency just as well as ministering. St Veronica's Church building fund prospers under Monsignor Desmond Spellacy's direction: he is the voice that goes on nightly on the radio, inviting Catholic Lay Angels to join with him in prayers for the world. We remember that this was the time of the Rosary Crusade and its accompanying embarrassments.

A Robert De Niro makes a witty and dazzling Monsignor Spellacy, against Robert Duval's older, more volatile Tom. Cyril Cusack appears briefly and entertainingly as some kind of intermediary who makes no sense at all. The film is a real-life portrait of a man who Desmond re-

spects, "for the good of the church". It's also for the good of the church that a shady, overweight magnate, Jack Amstordam (Charles Durning), should be voted Catholic layman of the year, and presented with a sash proclaiming as much, at a well-attended banquet; however, Sergeant Tom Spellacy knows a thing or two about Amstordam's extra-ecclesiastical activities, and doesn't hesitate to denounce St Veronica's prime benefactor. This does not help his brother's career in the church, but his brother, ultimately, a true Christian, doesn't hold it against him. Blood - the kind encountered in a criminal investigation anyway - is thicker than holy water.

True Confessions is a glossy, slow-moving production, impeccably acted, which makes the most of its fundamental contrasts: the purple wealth of the church dignitaries offsets the cynical, even nihilistic of the new dry-cleaning Catholics; the pompous looks distinctly gaudy beside the repulsive plainness of a convent room. On the one hand, we are offered transubstantiation; on the other, a real-life body and blood - a whole baptism of it. (No wonder the priest complains about a "suffert altar wine.") We learn from a prologue that Monsignor Spellacy, instead of becoming an auxiliary bishop as his superior had planned, has followed the sabbatical decree, has gone to an out-of-the-way parish where he reigns as a proper pastor of his spiritual mission; here his brother comes in search of absolution, and receives gratitude instead.

Half truths

By Harold Hobson

Incident at Tulse Hill
Hampstead Theatre

Robert East's play is directed by Harold Pinter, and reflects many Pinterian interests: marital betrayal, for example, and lodgers who by turns tell long anecdotes marked by internal incongruity, obsession and an infinite flow of words, and are bewildered into inexplicability. It presents its story in a manner that the first-night audience seemed to find baffling; for half of it is told after the fashion of the *nouveau roman* (Pinter's own fashion), in which the author knows no more than the words his characters speak, and half in the manner of a work by an author-as-God, who knows everything and puts all his cards on the table. Furthermore, the play's vital couple of phrases occur in the one part of the drama, and the vital incident in the other; and this vital incident - its pitiful indecency transformed by the finesse of the dialogue and the delicate playing of Alison Fiske and Maurice Denham into

Filling the virgin gap

By Hermione Lee

Virginia Fly is Drowning
BBC TV

Virginia Fly is a virgin in her thirties living in the Surrey suburbs with her prissy, bossy, prurient mother and her weak, affable father ("I was very fond of Mozart till your mother threw away the gramophone"). She teaches art, though we only see her staring out of the studio window, wears neat severe clothes, and goes to concerts with an elderly but attractive German Jewish professor of music. At night, though, she has wild erotic dreams of a handsome young man bursting into her bedroom (rather as in those Black Mistle advertisements), and she has been waiting for twelve years for her American boyfriend Charlie to come and marry her - or "at least seduce" her.

This quiet existence is broken into by a television crew making a programme about premarital love - or, in Virginia's case, the lack of it. ("You'd fill the virgin gap.") Virginia also has fantasies ("I'll be in a

something beautiful and touching - is so brief, so unemphatic that many people do not even notice that it is there, taking the last scene to be an experiment in the theory advanced in *The Browning Version* that an anti-climax can sometimes be surprisingly effective, whereas it is not an anti-climax at all, but a climax, in which the author demonstrates his thesis that between coming to a decision and finding out the truth there is often a great gut fixed. *Incident at Tulse Hill* is said to be Robert East's first play, and it is as likely to be misunderstood and dangerously underrated as was the first London play of its director.

It opens in a coroner's court. An inquest is being held on Henry Hopkins (Maurice Denham), an elderly, unemployed and discouraged actor. Undoubtedly Hopkins might shoot himself through the head in a tunnel on the Underground, and undoubtedly when the police find where he has run, his landlady is uncommonly eager to enter the tunnel before the inspector, the fatal shot being fired before he catches up with him. The coroner regards this as suspicious; the Inspector does not. It is here that the Inspector (Roland Oliver) remarks

large field breast high in buttercups - I'll see this beautiful young herdman - be'll lash the buttercups with his stick in a titillating sort of way" in an interview with "Geoffrey Wisdom", a media monster of self-regarding pseudishness. Then Charlie turns up for his London visit and for the long-awaited seduction. He is another kind of monster, complete with red braces, lascivious yodelling laugh, foul table manners and, as it transpires, a wife and children. On the rebound from that disaster, Virginia meets a smooth rich salesman to whom she's introduced by Mrs Thompson, a fat sentimental vulgar lady who dipples, years for her long-vanished teens, in the Ritz with "real gentlemen", affects a posh accent which keeps slipping, and becomes very clumsy with Virginia's mum. The try for love and passion with Ulick is another failure - jealous wife hurries into the Habitat bedroom just too soon - so, at last, after seeing the nice professor give a magnificent lecture on Mahler, she agrees to marry him, and lets mother dress her up in pink for the wedding. But though the Professor's jolly violinist friend urges her to bury her dreams, Virginia Fly knows she is doing the wrong thing; she's never had "a perfect love".

Anon Massey goes through Angela Huth's silly and vulgar play with a wry-faced steady sadness which just about carries it, and everyone works hard: the gallery of stooges that surround Virginia is energetically played, especially by Bruce Boa as Charlie and Noel Dyson as Mrs Fly. The design by Paul Joel and the direction by Mark Cullingham are scrupulous. But these don't disguise the thinness of the writer's imagination and the uneasy dash (especially awkward on television) between caricature and realism. The cliché of the repressed spinster dreaming of "a terrible passion" is so superficially treated as to be offensive; surely this subject should have had its day, unless it is to be dealt with more profoundly and precisely than it is here. The peripheral characters are carefully observed stereotypes of the conservative, the sensitive, the cultured, the German professor, the shabby-genteel posh lady - and though there are some snappy one-liners, most of the dialogue is banal and derivative.

Details are continually unconvincing. There are all sorts of irritating loose ends. And the play's attempt to negotiate between inner sadness and social comedy requires at once more authenticity in external and more knowledge of character and emotions.

Among this week's contributors

K. R. ANDREWS's books include *The Spanish Caribbean, Trade and Plunder, 1530-1630*, 1978.

ARNOLD BACHMAN's books include *Nine Lies About America*, 1972.

T. J. BRYNON is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

ROBIN BUSH is a lecturer in French at Woolwich College of Further Education.

FILIPPO DOMINI was formerly Director of the Italian Institute in London.

GARTH POWDEN is a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

E. B. FRYDE is co-editor of *Historical Studies of the English Parliament*, 1970.

ANTHONY GROOMS's books include *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 1976, and *Studies in Social and Political Theory*, 1977.

JANAK GYIMONYI's *Pasternak: A Critical Study*, 1977, has recently been reissued as a paperback.

ROY HARRIS is Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Oxford. His *The Language Myth* was published earlier this year.

PAUL HEBLES is a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster.

SIR HAROLD HOBSON is an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

MICHAEL HOWARD is Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford.

PETER HUNTER BLAIR is Emeritus Reader in Anglo-Saxon History in the University of Cambridge.

SAMUEL HYNES's most recent book is *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s*, 1976.

JOHN KERRIGAN's books include *The Face of Battle*, 1976.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published next spring.

SIR EDMUND LEACH's books include *Generals as Myth*, 1970, and *Culture and Communication*, 1976.

HERMIONE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen: an Introduction* was published earlier this year.

LAWRENCE LERNER's collections of poems include *The Mon. I. Killed*, 1980.

PETER LEWIS is a lecturer in English at the University of Durham.

DAVID MARTIN's books include *A Sociology of English Religion*, 1967. He is co-editor of *Sociology and Theology: Alliance and Conflict* which was published last year.

O. B. MILNER is Professor of Australasian Studies at the School for Oriental and African Studies, London.

REDMOND O'HANLON has recently completed a study of Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin.

R. A. PEACE is Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Hull. His most recent book, *The Enigma of Gogol*, was published earlier this year.

DAVID QUINN was Professor of Modern History at the University of Liverpool from 1956 to 1975. He is the editor of *The Last Voyages of Thomas Covendish, 1775, and New American World: a Documentary History of North America to 1672*, 1979.

CAROL RUMENS's collection of poems *Unplayed Music* was published earlier this year.

COLIN RURS is a lecturer in German at the University of Kent.

NICHOLAS SHREMPSTON is a Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall.

JULIAN SYMONS's most recent crime novel, *Sweet Adeline*, was published last year.

J. A. THOMPSON is a Fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

G. M. WILSON is Keeper of Edged Weapons at the Tower of London.

HUGO WILLIAMS's *No Particular Place to Go* was published earlier this year.

Anthologizing Christian Verse

Sir, - J. M. Cameron's review of my anthology (November 27) was thoughtful and generous, and some of his objections I ruefully concede. It is true that John Mason Neale should have been represented by his translations as well as by an original poem; and I ought not to have overlooked Norman Nicholson. Probably too the Welsh presence should have been strengthened by the inclusion of William Williams. I should like to defend myself against some of his other cavils.

(1) He asks how it is possible I should have represented C. H. Sisson and Jack Cremo while omitting Yvor Winters and Robert Lowell. My friend the late Yvor Winters was firmly, though I think regretfully, a non-believer, and none of his poems pretend otherwise. Thus I exclude him for just the reason that Cameron finds good in the cases of Emily Brontë and Arthur Hugh Clough, Thomas Hardy and Philip Larkin. As for the late Robert Lowell, all my friend since I quote verses by him in my introduction. Cameron may be sure that my omission of him, whether right or wrong, was at all events not unconsidered. The trouble that I have with Lowell's poems on Christian themes is glanced at on page 79 of my *Trying to Explain* (Carcanet).

(2) Cameron contends that my inclusion of H. F. Lytton's "Abido with me" is "a platitude breach" of my undertaking to present nothing that is not poetry in a rather exacting sense. I refer him to a spirited and closely argued appreciation of this poem by J. R. Watson in his Durham Inaugural Lecture, given last February and now in print.

(3) He finds it "baffling" that I should represent Blake by the one poem, "Jerusalem". But my predecessor Lord David Cecil in 1940 confessed to uncertainty whether Blake's poetry could be called Christian at all; "Jerusalem" is the poem upon which Blake has been Christianized as it were posthumously, by worshippers who, singing it, give it meaning that perhaps its author did not intend.

(4) I'm sure Cameron could soon outdo me in knowledge of the theology of the Reformation, but some years ago when I was baptized into the Anglican communion, I was certainly instructed that Holy Matrimony is in a strict sense a sacrament of that Church.

DONALD DAVIE.

Department of English, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235.

Wagner

Sir, - Peter Conrad (December 4) is entitled to adduce whatever evidence he can find (there isn't much) in support of his admiration for operatic productions that ignore or contradict the expressed intentions of composer and librettist. But he must not cite as "Wagner's advice to the performers of his own works" the phrases "Kinder, schaffet neuen!"; "Children, create [something new]".

These much quoted and widely misunderstood words have nothing whatever to do with performance. They occur in the course of a long letter to Liszt (September 2, 1852) in which Wagner inveighed against composers like Berlioz, and "Raff" (a propos of *Bernardini Cellini*), and instead of forging ahead to create something fresh and genuine, persisted in the hopeless attempt to "galvanize and resuscitate" old opera that had never had any life in them in the first place.

Like Verdi, Richard Strauss and most other operatic creators of whose wishes we are aware, Wagner had very precise and detailed ideas as to how he wanted his works

staged, and expressed them, not only in his copious stage directions, but (again like Verdi) in a stream of "production books" and pamphlets which he pressed on theatrical managements. The notion that his now famous phrase could conceivably have meant, "Put an irrelevant and disfiguring coat of paint on my perfectly sound and watertight structure", comical enough in itself, becomes doubly absurd when we find him telling Liszt, in the very same letter, "I have written tolerably comprehensive instructions for the performance of *Tannhäuser*, and have had them printed as a pamphlet and sent a sufficient number of copies to the theatres which have bought the score. I hope this will be of use; I send you herewith half-a-dozen copies." So much for the quaint idea of Wagner as a potential, though posthumous, enthusiast for novel and outlandish perversions of his own carefully planned and meticulously described creations.

DESMOND SHAW-TAYLOR.
15 Furlong Road, London N7.

'Auschwitz and the Allies'

Sir, - Martin Gilbert in his *Auschwitz and the Allies*, as noted by your reviewer Robert Warlick (December 4), says that if the RAF were able to destroy the industrial complexes near Auschwitz, they could easily have destroyed the gas chambers and railway lines. This is not so. When the Air Ministry stated that the mission was impracticable, they were stating a fact. Bombing during the war was not a precision affair, the area surrounding a target inevitably getting a blasting also, since about four-fifths of the bombs never landed within five miles of the target. To destroy the gas chambers would have necessitated destroying an entire camp, the inmates included. One assumes that no Allied government would have contemplated that for a moment.

Railway lines were, and still are, difficult to destroy from the air, and could in any case be repaired almost overnight. The equivalent to making a direct hit on a railway line would be the piercing of a cotton thread at fifty feet with a dart; and attempting a direct hit on a gas chamber without touching anything else would be like trying to hole in one in golf, the hole surrounded with eggs.

Small deviations from the appropriate speed, course and height, and errors in the estimation of wind speed and direction (the latter two, by necessity, having to be guessed when briefing bombing crews) meant enormous errors in strike position.

The "accidental" bombing by the USAAP of the Auschwitz camp was simply a normal bombing error.

D. W. THOMAS.

The Dell, Killay, Swansea.

P. G. Wodehouse

Sir, - The transatlantic mails have just brought to my attention your review of Benoy Green's biography of P. G. Wodehouse (October 16). I have since received his book and read it with considerable interest.

There appears an unfortunate slip in his book on page 128 of a date which he misquotes from my book (*P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master*, Gamston, 1975). Mr Green mistakes that the abort story "At Gelseheimers" was published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1921 whereas it appeared in that publication in 1915. The confusion on Mr Green's part arose because of his neglect to read my "Note" which appears at the beginning of the Short Story Appendix in which I state that all dates follow the sequence: Year-Month-Day, so that the particular listing for this short story is given as 15-2-21. This means that it appeared in the 21 August 1915 issue. In the interest of international scholarship,

to the editor

'Hollywood's Vietnam'

Sir, - From Léon Daudet to William Buckley, the extreme right-wing can claim a reasonable complement of droll polemicists. Richard Grenier, the resident film critic of *Commentary* who reviewed my book *Hollywood's Vietnam* (December 4), unfortunately isn't one of them. His facts turn out to be rather more original than his opinions; and even if it was to be expected that, bereft of both ideas and wit, he would have recourse to false emphasis and outright distortion, I really can't let his foolish assertions pass without comment.

DAVID A. JASEN.
Long Island University, Greenvale, New York 11548.

Andrei Voznesensky

Sir, - I find it very odd that Michael Horowitz (Letters, November 11) chooses to interpret my gentle irony at the expense of the (largely) British audience at Voznesensky's Round House poetry reading - an audience in which I naturally include myself - as xenophobic. He is perfectly justified however in taking me to task for my misquotation from "Chagall's Cornflakes". The phrase in question is, of course, "Man lives by sky alone" and not the negative version which I inadvertently wrote, for which carelessness I apologize. This nevertheless does not affect the substance of my criticism, which was that Voznesensky's repetition of the phrase is tedious. The sentiment has a cheap theatricality which suggests that Voznesensky tends, even when making a genuine protest, to say the kind of thing that poets are always expected to say, and it is perhaps for this reason that he is allowed, if under duress, to go on saying it.

I do not know what grounds Horowitz has for saying that I am more "inward" with Brodsky than Voznesensky. One can only perhaps be truly "inward" with poets of one's own tongue. But that is no reason not to respond as critically and imaginatively as possible to translations when they are presented as "poems". Certainly Voznesensky is a more engaging performer than Brodsky, but to my review I was considering, at that point, Voznesensky as a poet, not as a "chart-busting folk or pop-songwriter/singer". Since the stern art of poetry calls for words, let us judge these poets by their craft, manliness and innovation of their language, and give an outstanding talent (Brodsky's) its due.

Incidentally, Horowitz says that Brodsky is self-translated. The majority of the poems in his volume *A Part of Speech* were translated by other hands, though some of them were then reworked by the author (see Brodsky's note to *A Part of Speech*).

As to what the Soviet government thinks about either writer, any statement by an outsider can only be hypothetical, as the phrasing of my original comments made clear. But one indisputable fact remains. Whatever harassment Voznesensky has suffered (and I in no way wish to make light of this) he is still a Soviet citizen. The same cannot be said of Joseph Brodsky, whose enforced exile does perhaps suggest that the power of his language has been acknowledged, though in a somewhat xenophobic (i.e. antisemitic) manner.

CAROL RUMENS.

Rhodope

Sir, - "Rhodope that built the pyramid - if she did indeed build the pyramid, which Herodotus denies - made her fortune as a courtesan", writes Mary R. Lefkowitz (November 27). However, Herodotus (2.134-135) called her *Rhodopé*. "Rhodopé" is inaccurate or have the editors of his text forced the error upon him? It would be interesting to know.

GEORGE HUXLEY.
Department of Greek, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN.

He reproaches me with canonizing the Viet Cong. The fact is, no one, not even the Viet Cong per se, when it comes to the Vietnam war, has only their various facsimiles in Hollywood films (e.g. the snake-eyed addicts of Russian roulette depicted in *The Deer Hunter*).

The Deer Hunter is of course Adair's *bête noire* - he finds the slinging of "God Bless America" in the tragic closing scene "trumpy" so much mechanically tossed into the sentence, Grenier keeps mum on his objective critic, on similar grounds of accuracy, as a film about Vietnam (which is the point of view from which Adair was surely looking at it), as not just a piece of "trumpy" but actually an attempt completely to rewrite history. The film presents its America as a heroic escapees from apparently inherently and debasedly vicious Asians, while in truth, of course, - as millions of Indo-Chinese who were forced to become escapees from - or, as often as not, victims of - mutilated limbs of the tortures applied by Americans with so much more devastating lack of discrimination. Since *The Deer Hunter* does not offer even a hint of the massive destruction wrought by Americans in Vietnam, it surely deserves, as it would be, according to any critic who wished to see the truth rather than convenient and apologetic lies recorded on the screen, the "black marks" awarded it by Adair. A concern for at least minimal standards of accuracy is also presumably the reason why *Apocalypse Now*, which does at least admit the destructiveness of the American military machine in Vietnam, is more to Adair's "liking" as Richard Grenier so condescendingly puts it - though *Apocalypse Now*, too, is a deeply propagandist film, attempting to persuade its viewers, by showing the regular US Army punting its "unsound", irregular forces, that the official American intervention in Vietnam was in no way criminal or immoral.

It is as if the attitudes in it had been stored in a time capsule. Leaving aside Grenier's unsavoury implication that the anti-war protest movement was a peculiarly 60s, faddish phenomenon, akin to Flower Power or a taste for Hermann Hesse, I have to point out that the attitudes analysed in my book are precisely those racist and bellicose ones endorsed by such post-1975 films as *The Boys in Company C* and *The Deer Hunter*. It is their, not mine, which seem to have been stored in a time capsule.

Grenier appropriates the next three columns of his review to apprise the reader of his own meditations on the war. "My own view, from quite early on, was that it was far beyond the nation's capacities, not worth the price in blood or money." To be sure, had it been worth the price in blood, it would have been there sooner - but just have been in there sooner - but just then, after demanding Western democracies' peaky freedom of information, he blithely sums up: "One of the more obvious lessons of Vietnam - hard to miss now - is that democratic nations cannot fight wars without rousing the public ire." One wonders which option Grenier would prefer to sacrifice, democracy or the licence to fight wars in peace, so to speak.

In his concluding paragraph, he

sarcastically suggests, apropos of some imagined shift in Hollywood's dominant ideology, that I now write a study on Hollywood and the New Nationalism. Grenier is naive: in the context of mainstream American cinema, there can be no such thing as a "new" nationalism.

GILBERT ADAIR.
Proteus Publishing, Sale Place, London WC2.

Sir, - Whatever the rhetorical excesses of Gilbert Adair's *Hollywood's Vietnam*, your reviewer Richard Grenier's far worse distortions (December 4) cannot be allowed to pass.

Shortness of space - obviously not incidentally, a problem for which Grenier, who was permitted by you to fill over two-thirds of a long review with allegations and personal prejudices which were not only unsubstantiated but also irrelevant - forces me to forego any attempt at a comprehensive reply, so I will confine myself to some of the points Grenier makes which do at least touch on the concerns of Adair's book.

Although, in *The Deer Hunter*, the scene of the singing of "God Bless America" may, in that it reflects accurately America's craving after Vietnam for a healing sense of unity, be more than "trumpy" (as Grenier criticizes Adair for calling it), the film itself must be viewed by any objective critic, on similar grounds of accuracy, as a film about Vietnam (which is the point of view from which Adair was surely looking at it), as not just a piece of "trumpy" but actually an attempt completely to rewrite history. The film presents its America as a heroic escapees from apparently inherently and debasedly vicious Asians, while in truth, of course, - as millions of Indo-Chinese who were forced to become escapees from - or, as often as not, victims of - mutilated limbs of the tortures applied by Americans with so much more devastating lack of discrimination. Since *The Deer Hunter* does not offer even a hint of the massive destruction wrought by Americans in Vietnam, it surely deserves, as it would be, according to any critic who wished to see the truth rather than convenient and apologetic lies recorded on the screen, the "black marks" awarded it by Adair. A concern for at least minimal standards of accuracy is also presumably the reason why *Apocalypse Now*, which does at least admit the destructiveness of the American military machine in Vietnam, is more to Adair's "liking" as Richard Grenier so condescendingly puts it - though *Apocalypse Now*, too, is a deeply propagandist film, attempting to persuade its viewers, by showing the regular US Army punting its "unsound", irregular forces, that the official American intervention in Vietnam was in no way criminal or immoral.

As for the rest of Richard Grenier's review, may I suggest to you that you bear in mind that Vietnam is still too close for even the most detached historians to contemplate as a subject with any objective certainty, and that you therefore be careful to scrutinize statements about it in your columns - especially unsubstantiated and opinionated ones from, quite clearly partisan sources such as Mr Grenier - with the greatest rigour.

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A fist where a face should be

By Peter Lewis

ALAN BURNS:
The Day Daddy Died
138pp. Allison & Busby. £6.95.
(Paperback, £2.95).
0 85031 381 3

In the aggressive testament verging on an artistic manifesto which he published in 1970, Alan Burns launched a blitzkrieg on orthodox fiction, arguing that the novel was the only art form that had stood still for fifty years. In its mainstream form, the novel was an anachronism, and as a relic of bygone rationalism and liberalism was utterly irrelevant to the chaotic and fragmented world of the present. Only a radically new form of fiction, presumably of the anarchic kind Burns himself had been writing, could hope to interpret contemporary life. Such Continental and American-inspired views were common enough towards the end of the "swinging" decade, and were a refreshing response to the cultural conservatism of the post-war period. Had they produced a few major literary achievements in England which could not be ignored, they would not be so easily derided as they are now that conservatism has reasserted itself so comprehensively.

Like B. S. Johnson, with whom he is often linked, Burns acquired his reputation as an innovative novelist or anti-novelist during the 1960s, when he published his first four books. Charles Marowitz's production of his topical play *Palace at the Open Space* in 1970 confirmed Burns's status as one of the most interesting writers to have emerged during the previous decade, but not long after, Robert Nye suggested that with *Abel* (1969) Burns and his "burnt-out" style had reached a dead end: having exhausted the possibilities of one idiom, Burns would have to change course. Burns has certainly been much less productive as an imaginative writer since those heady days, although he has published two non-fiction books: *The Day Daddy Died* is his first, novel since *The Angry Brigade*, nearly seven years ago.

What gives his new novel the immediate appearance of an experimental work is the inclusion of eighteen photo-collages by Ian Breakwell, interspersed throughout the text. These are neither illustrations in the usual sense, nor integral elements of the novel; rather, they form a parallel sequence of images which derive from the novel but do not really add anything to it. The visual material may need the text, but the text does not need the photo-collages. The principal effect of these, with their surreal juxtapositions, is to give an overall impression of a type of artistic adventurousness to which the novel itself does not aspire.

The opening picture, a portrait with a fist where a face should be, may prompt formal dislocation and linguistic fireworks, but the fast-moving narrative proves to be straightforward and chronological, while the idiom, though varied, is for the most part simple and lucid. Even so, the novel is far from orthodox, since Burns is not writing in the mainstream tradition of psychological fiction, but going back to the roots of the genre in episodic, picaresque narratives. It is Defoe, whom *The Day Daddy Died* brings to mind, and Norah, Burns's working-class heroine (the word is not inappropriate), recalls Defoe's most famous female survivor, Moll Flanders. What is most striking about the style is the deliberately jarring effect Burns produces by periodically changing gear for a short time from direct exposition to a more allusive, indirect, and evocative mode.

Although short, even by contemporary standards, Burns's novel charts Norah's life over about forty years, from childhood in the 1930s to the present day. To achieve this, Burns has to be highly selective and skilful in his handling of time, and in his selection of events and characters to include.

itimate children, all fathered by different men. Like Defoe, Burns is concerned mainly with outward events, with actions and their consequences, rather than with interior processes. Norah goes through men (only one of whom she marries) much as Moll Flanders goes through husbands, but for all her varied sexual experience Norah retains a kind of innocence and integrity. In her relationships, she is the one to be taken advantage of, but she bears no grudges, accepting her unplanned pregnancies as part of her purpose in life. Her devotion to her large family is absolute, and is associated with her love for her father, who died when she was entering adolescence. Her relationship with her father's memory is probably the most stable one she has.

Again like Moll Flanders, Norah has a wonderful ability to survive in

a hostile world. Her life as a single parent is full of extreme hardship, privation, and suffering. She is never crushed, even when most of the children are taken away from her for a time because of what is interpreted as her failure and inadequacy as a mother, or when her eldest, self-destructive boy, Terry, eventually succeeds in committing suicide. Norah's formidable resilience enables her to keep looking forward to the future with hope instead of back with regret and despair. Significantly, the novel ends on a strong upbeat with Norah riding high.

Implicit in Burns's celebration of this individualistic, earth-mother figure are two very different forms of criticism, one social, the other literary. Konrad Adenauer once said, "The Welfare State is the end of welfare", and today the Welfare State is under strong attack from

both Right and Left. Norah's non-conformism and independence make her a natural victim of the authoritarian and bureaucratic Welfare State, and Burns's novel is in some ways an indictment of a nominally democratic society which congratulates itself on being "caring" while it is actually destructive of human happiness and of human beings themselves. Burns's anarchic zeal glows beneath the surface.

At the literary level, Burns's novel about a disadvantaged woman who really does have something to moan about but does not do so, contains an implied attack on a staple of contemporary fiction, replete with middle-class neuroses, privileges, and pains, and characters with plenty of time to enjoy their frequently self-inflicted anguish. A luxury Norah cannot afford. Although on the surface *The Day Daddy Died* appears to

be markedly different from Burns's self-consciously experimental fiction of the 1960s, a strong subversive current is felt throughout. Burns has found a way of accommodating his anarchic vision within a framework more appropriate to the 1980s than the absurdist paradigms of his early books.

Six Novelists Look at Society, "An Enquiry into the Social Views of Elizabeth Bowen, L. P. Hartley, Rosamund Lehman, Christopher Isherwood, Nancy Mitford and C. P. Snow" by John Atkins, has just been reissued in paperback (284pp, John Calder, £3.95, 0 7145 3863 9). The publishers comment that the book is "both a study of changes that have taken place in English society during the crucial half century from 1920 to 1970, and the effect of such changes on the writers in question".

adapting and surviving, and even retaining a measure of dignity. At one point Traven describes a man dancing with a girl at a fiesta with a bundle in his hand because there is nowhere to leave it.

He held it while they danced. It looked foolish, although none of the other dancers cared whether a man danced with a bundle in his hand or a box under his arm, and if anyone had given the matter a thought he would have said to himself that someone who danced with a bundle in his hand must have a good reason for it, since he wouldn't do it from choice.

That, we are meant to realize, is the way it is. A man will dance with a bundle in his hand or a box under his arm; similarly he will suffer all kinds of indignities and still remain a man. This is a funny, sad and deeply compassionate novel that is bound to add to the strength of the Traven revival.

In the same realistic, matter-of-fact manner, the poor are shown

The freedom from possessions

By Savkar Altinel

B. TRAVEN:
The Carreta
264pp. Allison & Busby £6.95.
(Paperback, £2.95).
0 85031 392 9

Writers who try to avoid the limelight normally end up by achieving notoriety for that very reason. Until relatively recently, however, little was known in this country about B. Traveno and his lifelong obsession with secrecy. Then came a special edition of *The Book Programme*, followed by a well-researched book by the programme's producer, Will Wyatt, entitled *The Man Who Was B. Traveno*; people who had never heard of this elusive figure before were not only introduced to the mystery surrounding him but also offered the solution. Now it is common knowledge that Traven lived in Mexico, used a post-office box number when writing to his various publishers, never answered any enquiry concerning himself, successfully evaded all those who went in search of him, and died, leaving behind him a riddle. The answer to this was found by Wyatt and his researchers, who were able to identify him as one Otto Wenecke, who had had an earlier career as an actor and anarchist in Germany under the name of "Ret Marut" before leaving Europe for good in the early 1920s to start a new life as a novelist on the other side of the Atlantic.

More importantly, Traven, who never lacked admirers anywhere else in the world, at last has a following in Britain as well, and most of his major works are back in print. This is a most welcome development, for in many ways he is a remarkable writer. Although his main subject matter – the exploitation of the Mexican poor by foreign investors and big landowners – is hardly original, he handles it with considerable grace and subtlety. While most writers who deal with developing countries feel obliged to come up with prolonged descriptions of suffering and trades against tyranny, Traven uses a mixture of humour and irony that is ultimately much more devastating in its effects. In his books suffering is never allowed to blot out life altogether. Indeed, free from possessions and free from anxiety about them, the poor enjoy a curious vitality, whereas the empty-minded bourgeois appears as a pitiful creature shut out from life by the barriers he erects around himself to protect his wealth. In a splendid scene in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, for instance, a group of naked men bathing in a stream while white ladies can only nervously survey the same spectacle through opera glasses from their villas in the distance.

Furthermore, by showing the bourgeois to be essentially lifeless and stupid, Traven manages to make him appear insignificant despite all his power, a species doomed to pass

away as soon as a particular phase of social evolution is over. His work is full of the kind of hope that noisier writers fail to offer.

The Carreta is the second of Traven's six so-called "Jungle Novels", dealing with the Mexican revolution of 1910, which are now being reissued; it has all the characteristics of the other novels. A twelve-year-old poem touched Andres Ugalde is sent by his landlord to work in a nearby town where his new master loses him in a game of cards to a haulage contractor. The boy thus has to learn to drive a carreta, or ox-cart, and eventually becomes an en-cargado, a kind of caravan leader in charge of an entire train of carretas. Traven is interested, however, not so much in telling a specific story as conveying the general misery of pre-revolutionary Mexico, and this he does admirably.

The book is organized round the

institution of debt slavery. Whatever a peasant or worker needs has to be obtained from his master, who lends him have it on credit at four or five times its real value provided that he agrees to receive no wages until the debt is discharged. But before he can pay off one debt a man usually incurs others, and he can never be free. If he tries to run away he is caught and brought back, and the cost of tracking him down is added to the sum he already owes. Moreover, there is always the danger that after a certain point he may be sold to one of the firms in the mahogany trade and worked to death. It is an inhumane system, yet Traven never lets us forget that it is run by perfectly ordinary human beings. The masters come across as common oafs corrupted by a mindless devotion to money.

In the same realistic, matter-of-fact manner, the poor are shown

Predators and their prey

By Robin Buss

MICHEL DEL CASTILLO:
La nuit du Décret
326pp. Paris: Seuil.

The epigraph of Michel Del Castillo's novel is from *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Each of us is guilty of everything towards everyone." This is slightly ungenerous in a work which, in technique, owes more than a passing debt to the yododunnit, a genre based on very different assumptions, but it is an apt summary of Del Castillo's theme. There is an investigation, conducted by the narrator, not into a crime but into the character of his boss, police inspector Avellino Pared. Since this is Spain towards the end of the Franco era, the enquiry reveals some sinister aspects of both the exercise of power and the police mentality, but its primary fascination lies in the gradual peeling of the elements of a jigsaw puzzle and, as with the best detective novels, in the personal conflict between the investigator and his prey. However, as the epigraph from Dostoevsky forewarns us, the lines between villain and inquirer are not clearly drawn.

It is difficult to say more without giving away the secrets of a well-managed plot. Pared is the ultimate policeman, dedicated to the concept of order, tireless in the pursuit of the intelligence needed to maintain it. If his personality seems at times exaggerated, even melodramatic, it is because he obeys a force of nature that leads to the reduction of anomalies and to the establishment of a stable order. When he detects weakness, he exploits it; he mercilessly, tenderly encourages his wife's greed until she is immobilized by obesity; or defeating an anarchist intellectual

with his own logic. It might be hard to accept this stage villain if he did not remain offstage for much of the book and operate indirectly through his affect on the narrator, Laredo. Indeed, the moral crux of the story lies in the betrayal by Laredo of the homosexual school-teacher, an incident from his adolescence which he comes to understand only when he sees it in the context of Pared's personality and career.

Though *La Nuit du Décret*, which won this year's Prix Renaudot, can hardly be read as a tribute to the police in Spain or elsewhere, its

repugnance is directed against *les forces de l'ordre* in a more general sense. Pared emerges finally as the counterpart to Jonas Erda, hero of Dider Decon's novel *Un policeman*, who (reflecting perhaps the shining reputation of the English lobby) sets out to right a trivial wrong in obedience to divine ideal of justice. Del Castillo's inspector, coming from the Catholic country where they have never confused the functions of the secular and the religious arm, is a servant of the old law which cannot allow for the vagaries of a Redeemer: "Tout ce que la police abhorre, cet illuminé l'incarne: l'errance, la subversion, l'esprit d'indécision".

Descending scale

By Colin Russ

GABRIELE WOHMANN:
Das Glücksspiel
234pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand.

Lilly Steiner, a piano teacher, has to cope with a world made up of the second-hand and the second-rate. She lives with her stepson and (not entirely plausibly) somebody else's elderly uncle, reads the German equivalent of a Sunday supplement with a diminishing enthusiasm, embarks on an affair which gives her more to observe than to enjoy, and is forced to see her domestic milieu as a theatrical set. Motifs of physical frailty and inadequacy recur throughout and underline the sense of disorientation. Language, too, is damaged by the use of cliché, including the abbreviated form of her name which Lilly (Elizabeth) seeks to re-

nounce. Eventually, impulses both murderous and suicidal surface, and destroy her bizarre household. The book ends with Lilly in an unbalanced state and being taken into police custody.

It is tempting to see Lilly's fate as illustrating the predicament of a woman denied compassion and understanding in a man's world. Yet Gabriele Wohmann is not a feminist writer. Claudia, the determinedly emancipated character in Lilly's circle, is viewed with scorn: she is the worst cliché of all. As usual, the author offers no easy solutions to the problems that she raises. In particular, her domestic interiors remain characteristically woody. Any small victories scored by her figures, adrift in a loveless world, remain precarious and provisional. Compassion is reserved for the reader; lying as it does in the sardonic humour and deft imagery with which Wohmann seasons, or to be precise salts, her narrative.

PETER VANSITTART:
Values from the Great War
303pp. Cape. £7.95.
0 224 01915 5

CATHERINE W. REILLY (Editor):
Sears Upon my Heart
Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War
144pp. Virago. £3.75.
0 85068 226 9

JON SILKIN (Editor):
The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry
Second Edition
282pp. Penguin. £1.75.
0 14 042 255 2

Sixty years after the Armistice, and separated from us now by one greater war and many lesser ones, the First World War nevertheless remains the Western world's favourite: still written about, anthologized, and re-enacted on our television screens. Since it is commonly agreed to have been the stupidest and most wastefully destructive of human conflicts, one might consider that there was something a bit paradoxical in this continuing popularity.

But of course there is no real paradox here: we like to be reminded of that war because, of all wars, it most unambiguously confirms the ideas that most of us have of the nature of war itself. All wars are stupid and wasteful, but the Great War made that point with exceptional clarity – mainly, I think, because it went on and on in the same place. In a mobile war the armies move on from their dead and can forget them; but in the stationary war on the Western Front the living stayed with the dead, walked over them in the trenches, watched them decompose on the wire, and so were daily reminded of the enormity of their losses and the insignificance of their gains. We inherit their images, and the point they make: that in such a situation war is reduced to its fundamental truth – men killing each other.

The Great War was also the last large-scale war to which men brought idealistic notions of war itself: that it embodied, that it gave healthy exercise to lethargic, peaceable nations; that it was the highest exercise of virility – all that "swimmers into cleanness leaping" stuff that so excited Rupert Brooke. The actual fighting seemed to destroy all that, to reduce once and for all the folly of idealism – not only that idealism, but any idealism. Ideals were a trick played by the old on the young: "If any question why we died / Tell them – because our fathers lied" wrote Kipling, whose son was killed in France. And surely one reason that we return to the War is the satisfaction that its ignorant ironies give us; to think that men once went to war for those beliefs, and found reality! (The Second World War, our war, was by comparison an ideal-less affair, no more than a task to be done.)

It has become customary to call a personal conception of history a myth, and in this sense most of us have a myth of the Great War, composed of war readings (novels) and boys' news, his image of that war took shape, how it acquired characters (the Kaiser, Ludendorff, Captain Boylston), and a language (*Boche*, *Minute Wefers*, *Bras Hat*), a landscape (Mons, Somme, Wipers, Passchendaele), and became at least his Great War, "a monstrous fizzle of myth and legend, romantic falsehoods and despicable truths".

Values is a representation of that personal myth, reconstructed out of the miscellaneous facts and fictions that constitute it. In Vansittart's mind, he calls his book an anthology, but it isn't really that: it isn't representative of anything except the compiler's sense of what the Great War was like, and what it meant. It would be more precise, I think, to call it a collage – an image composed of bits and pieces, which collectively

major literary event with important consequences for modern writing. One of the crucial documents in this bit of myth-making is the Preface that Wilfred Owen drafted for his first book of poems: indeed you could argue that that unfinished preface is more important to the history of modernism than any of his poems. "My subject is War, and the pity of War", Owen wrote. "The Poetry is in the pity." And ironic pity became a commonplace modernist attitude, almost a cliché ("Irony and Pity", the Donald Ogden Stewart character in *Fiesta* says. "When you're feeling... Oh, Give them Irony and Give them Pity.")

Owen also excluded certain themes – and the words that name them – as inappropriate to a correct pity. "This book is not about put heretics... Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War." This statement

represents and interprets its subject. The pieces are small (few longer than a page, some only a line or two) and very numerous. Quotations from some of the best-known writers of the war – Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg, Blunden, Hemingway, Rosenberg, Gurney – mix with soldiers' songs and sayings, newspaper headlines, personal letters, and public proclamations.

The organization of the book is chronological, and passages are carefully dated to keep the reader lost in time. But the book isn't history, in the customary sense: it does not interpret, or construct patterns of cause and effect; it simply drops piece after piece into place. The initial impression it gives is of a remote, ironic detachment, as though the book had been put together by Hardy's Ironic Spirits. The war moves through its time, its details deliberately discontinuous and apparently random, composing in its

to the credit of the women. In her introduction Miss Reilly complains that the contribution of women has been largely ignored in modern anthologies of First World War poetry, and indeed she is quite right (Jon Silkin, for example, includes work by two Russian women in his *Penguin Book*, but none by English women). But her own selections make the reason obvious and overwhelming: these women simply weren't very good poets, at least not in their war-poems. Most of the women of the war generation who had or made literary reputations are represented here: Amy Lowell, Charlotte Mew, Alice Meynell, Horriet Monroe, Edith Sitwell, Sara Teasdale, Katharina Tynan among the poets, as well as prose-writers Margaret Cole, Rose Macaulay, Mary Sinclair, Marie Stopes and Mary Webb. But none of them is represented by really memorable verse. It is hard to imagine any single poem in this collection finding its way into a general anthology of twentieth-century poetry.

Obviously, then, this is not an anthology to be judged, or even read, for its literary merit. But there are other good reasons for reading these poems: they tell us what these women were thinking in wartime – about war, and also about poetry, or to put it another way, about subjects and what forms they thought appropriate for poetry then. For the most part they follow Owen's interdictions: there are not many poems about deeds, lands, glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, nor do these forbidden words occur often. Their subjects are rather personal loss, loneliness, suffering, and most of all endurance – the chief virtue of the passive and helpless. Some are bitter, some ironic, some as angry as Sassoon. Many try to make the desperate best of death, writing about immortality and the deathless heart.

Many – I'd say most – of the poets accept the war as morally right and necessary. This is not surprising: most English women of those years would have felt so. Even the Vera Brittain poem that gives the collection its title is essentially pro-war:

To My Brother
Your battle-wounds are scars upon my heart
Received when in that grand and tragic show
You played your part
Two years ago,

And silver in the summer morning
I see the symbol of your courage glow –
That Cross you won
Two years ago.

Though now again you watch the shrapnel fly,
And here the guns that daily louder grow,

As in July
Two years ago,
May you endure to lead the Last

And with you then pursue the flying foe
As once in France
Two years ago.

This poem, with its mixture of hero-worship and marital excitement, is fairly representative of the collection: it is personal, and no doubt it was deeply felt, but it simply confirms the general truth that most poems are made, not out of experience but out of other poetry – out of "poetic" emotions, and poetic language, and traditional poetic forms. The most interesting poems here, in fact, are the least poetic – the formal personal statements that reach for honest descriptions of experience, and never mind the poetry: a nursing scene at Rouen, night duty in a hospital ward, a "Jingo Woman" – a wartime picnic, an episode at the Cenotaph. Such poems add feelings to the social history of the time, and I'm glad to have them available.

Though Catherine Reilly shares with Vansittart (and the rest of us) the liberal myth of the war ("a gross

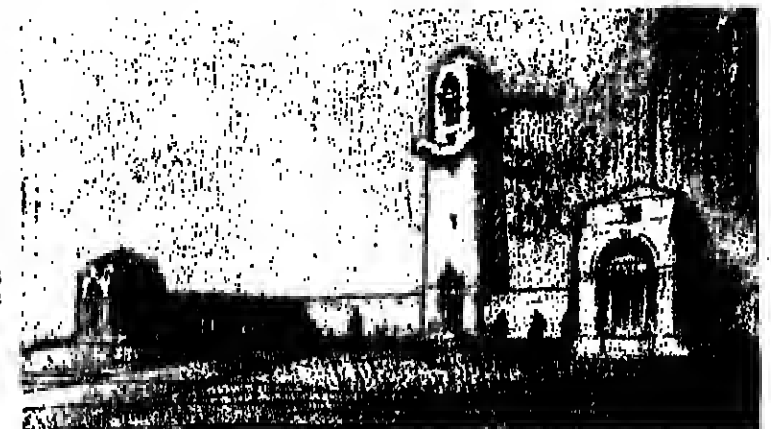
folly and an immense agony", she calls it in her introduction), her book is not polemical. There is, however, an aggressive polemical thrust to the preface that Judith Kazantzis contributes. What Mrs Kazantzis argues is that these poems are feminist, anti-war, and "anti-macho". But what she really says, when she lowers her voice to describe the poems, is that they are just what one might expect of ordinary patriotic, religious, romantic, domestic middle-class women of their time, faced with a war that seemed both to demand those values of women, and to annihilate them: that is, that the poems are troubled, confused, and sometimes contradictory, as the world seemed to be. The descriptive account, here, is a good deal more interesting than the polemical over-ly.

Still, one can understand the polemical impulse: how can you be neutral or objective about war? or about the poetry that has come out of it? Should not even the anthology assume a moral posture? Jon Silkin's *Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, which has recently been reissued in a second, expanded edition, is a striking demonstration of this problem. Silkin's views on war become quite clear in the course of his long introduction to the book. (Also his views on Homer, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, F. R. Leavis, John H. Johnson and Donald Hibbard – has there ever been another Penguin anthology that carried a sixty-page introduction to less than 200 pages of text?) From these views Silkin argues an aesthetic that will enable him to judge poets by their attitudes toward war: "I believe," he says, "it's possible to evaluate the war poets for their explicit ideas." And he proceeds, at considerable length, to do so. The consequence, essentially, is that the attitudes embodied in the liberal myth of war become standards of literary judgment. Those poems that speak against this polemical posture are identified in the introduction as poems that "caught, and held, the sense of an ethos", but are not good poems; and, lest the unwary reader should admire them, they are marked in the text with an asterisk.

Silkin specifically rejects the idea of making a "historical" anthology; his, he says, has tried to limit itself to excellence. But what does excellence mean here? An excellent view of war, apparently. Most of the poems that Silkin has chosen are the ones that most of us would choose: the canon of Great War poets is pretty well established by now. The only surprises are a poem by Lawrence that has nothing to do with the war, and a poem by Herbert Read written in 1933. But Silkin has restricted the range of attitude and tone within that canon. In order to reinforce once more the liberal myth that we all share.

There are two points at issue here. First, the judgment of poetry in terms of its explicit ideas: there is a kind of content control in this that I find unattractive and a bit sinister. And second, the question of the historical responsibility of the anthology. A book of poems of the First World War is inevitably historical; there can be no question about that. And if historical, should it not represent? Should it not include Grenfell without the "condemning asterisk"? And perhaps Sassoon's "A Soldier's Boy" and Guiney's "To the Post Before Battle"? How, with only this anthology to guide him, will a reader ever get behind the myth, to the war?

Miss Reilly, in her modest way, comes closest to meeting history honestly. Vansittart also tries to be scrupulous (he gives Julian Grenfell a more decent representation than Silkin does), and if his own view is always clear, that, after all, it is his subject. But Silkin rejects history, and redefines excellence to suit his own polemical wishes, and though the selection that results is a book of good poems, it is not, I think, a good anthology.



This perspective sketch by Luyens for his design for the Australian National War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Cemetery in the Somme is included in the exhibition of his work at the Hayward Gallery (until January 31, 1982) which was reviewed in the TLS on November 27.

sets limits to modernist, post-war fiction, ten years later Hemingway echoed it too, in a battle-fied meditation in *A Farewell to Arms*: "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice and the expression in vain. . . . Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage, or hallow were obscene, beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates."

What Owen was asserting in his Preface was that war had made a modernist style necessary. Not that modernism began with the Great War; but that it was made inevitable there – that it was what was left when the lies of the Old Men had been demolished. Hemingway started from essentially the same place, and so did most other post-war modernists, from Eliot to Michael Arian. And we inherit their myth: that the Great War validated myth, and invalidated abstractions.

If the Great War is so important, both to our anti-war myth of war and to our myths of modernism, it isn't surprising that contemporary writers should continue to be drawn to it, and to feel a need to re-create it, yet again. Peter Vansittart, for example, is a mix of the Second World War, who came of age in 1941; yet it is the First War that has engaged his imagination. In his introduction to *Values from the Great War* he describes how, in his school-days, his image of that war took shape, how it acquired characters

(the Kaiser, Ludendorff, Captain Boylston), and a language (*Boche*, *Minute Wefers*, *Bras Hat*), a landscape (Mons, Somme, Wipers, Passchendaele), and became at least his Great War, "a monstrous fizzle of myth and legend, romantic falsehoods and despicable truths".

Values is a representation of that personal myth, reconstructed out of the miscellaneous facts and fictions that constitute it. In Vansittart's mind, he calls his book an anthology, but it isn't really that: it isn't representative of anything except the compiler's sense of what the Great War was like, and what it meant. It would be more precise, I think, to call it a collage – an image composed of bits and pieces, which collectively

Students of modern literary history have another myth of the war, as a

In search of the Superman

By Filippo Donini

EZIO RAIMONDI:
Il Silenzio della Gergone
181pp. Bologna: Zanichelli. L. 6,400.

VITTORIO VETTORI:
D'Annunzio e il mito del Superuomo
286pp. Castello di Borgo alla Colina
(Arezzo): Accademia Casentinese
L. 15,000.

D'ANNUNZIO/CIANO:
Carteggio lucido
Gardone (Brescia): Quaderni del
Vittoriale. L. 3,000.

The lowest point of D'Annunzio's fame and popularity was reached immediately after the Second World War, when the collapse of Fascism led to a detestation of the man who was considered, not without foundation, as having been responsible for starting the political movement which ruined Italy. The poet seemed to have been buried along with his nationalism, and the cult of D'Annunzio remained for a long time the preserve of the small neo-Fascist party.

But in the 1960s things began to change. D'Annunzio's critical attitude towards Mussolini, and his lukewarm and superficial acceptance of a triumphant Fascism, were studied more closely by historians, and the permanent value of his poetry - the modernity of its intimate core, its tremendous influence on all subsequent Italian poets of this century - has been the object of accurate and penetrating research. Although some critics persist in maintaining, with Edoardo Sanguineti, that whatever positive has been achieved in Italian literature in the course of this century derives from a reaction to D'Annunzio, Mantel's balanced judgement is more widely accepted: "D'Annunzio's influence is present in all subsequent Italian poets because he attempted all the stylistic and metrical possibilities of our time, and not to have learnt anything from him would be a very bad sign."

The main landmarks in the process of D'Annunzio's recovery of favour in Italy were the appearance in 1960 of E. De Michelis's *Tutto D'Annunzio*, a collection of essays produced to mark the centenary of his birth in 1963, E. Raimondi's admirable chap-

ter in Cecchi and Sapegno's *History of Italian Literature* (1969), Renzo De Felice's studies on the *Ceremonies between D'Annunzio and Mussolini* (1971) and on *D'Annunzio politico* (1979), F. Roncoroni's excellent commentary in the Garzanti anthology of D'Annunzio's poems (1978), and Piero Chiarelli's accurate but fundamentally hostile biography of the poet (also 1978), which provoked many useful debates.

In recent years the Fondazione del Vittoriale, an institution whose purpose is to preserve D'Annunzio's last home (which the poet himself called "Il Vittoriale" in memory of the Italian victory over Austria in 1918) and to promote knowledge of his works, has been active in many ways, publishing bulletins which often included first-rate studies, arranging successful exhibitions at its premises by Lako Garda and convening several national and international conferences. Other meetings have taken place at Pesera, where the poet was born, and of these the one held in 1979 on "The Young D'Annunzio and *Verismo*" and this year's conference on D'Annunzio's *Trilogia della morte* have been the most memorable; some hitherto unknown poems by the prodigious youth have also been published: *Rime inedite e stralci di Gergone* (edited by Raffaele Tiberti, Pescara, 1981).

The interest among critics and scholars is paralleled by an increased curiosity among the general public. Visconti's film of *L'innocente* (1976) probably encouraged many people to read D'Annunzio's novels again, or for the first time, and Mendadori were prompt to republish them. Some of his plays have been performed: even his mediocre *Porfina* has been resurrected, with the music of Mascagni, and new performances of *Sogno di un tramonto d'inverno* are announced for Milan, and of *La figlia di Jorio* at Prato. Streams of visitors flock to the Vittoriale, attracted not so much by a present exhibition of objects connected with the poet's intimate life (his bed, his nightgowns, even his bath and brief) but also by the poetical overtones of much of the *décor* and the mottoes. The inscription which Mussolini had to read on his famous visit: "Remember that you are made of glass."

and I of steel", regularly keeps the crowds awake.

It is curious that the memory of the author of *Lais* verse, whose best pages, both in prose and in verse, express a magnificent, vigorous glorification of life, should have been petrified, at the Vittoriale, into a sort of funeral temple. But the correspondence between D'Annunzio and his architect, Gian Carlo Maroni, which was published in the Foundation's bulletin in 1979, shows beyond doubt how gloomy and despondent the former Superman and Superlover was in his last years, when days of futile pursuit were followed by desolate nights in loneliness or mercurial debauch. So that if the architect gave the Vittoriale its predominant aspect of triumphal sepulchre, he certainly did not traduce his master's intentions.

To separate the enduring from the transitory in D'Annunzio's work, that is to extricate from the bulk of his far-ranging production the "intimate core" of his highest inspiration, has always been the purpose of his most penetrating critics. From Croce, Bergese and Gargiulo in the early decades of this century to the protagonists of the current reevaluation, there has been a persistent effort to divest the poet of his many disguises in order to reveal his genuine self. In Raimondi's essay, to which I have already referred, marked a great step forward in this respect and was generally hailed as a new and very convincing interpretation of D'Annunzio's work. It is now reprinted and completed with an introduction on "D'Annunzio, Serra e il Novecento" and a new chapter on the relations between D'Annunzio and symbolism.

Raimondi accepts Croce's definition of D'Annunzio as a "dilettante di sensazioni", but without the disparaging implications which qualified Croce's basically correct verdict. Transforming the joy of the senses into poetry is something that only a true magician like D'Annunzio could achieve, and Raimondi has some very illuminating passages on the "transfiguration of reality" which occurs in the best poems of *Alcyon* (especially in "Meriggio"). Raimondi's ear is also very alert to D'Annunzio's music, and this too is a great comfort after years of

fashionable revulsion among Italian critics from both rhythm and rhyme. Appropriately, he quotes Yeats on the value of rhythm in prolonging "the moment of contemplation". Incidentally, Raimondi is among the least provincial of Italian critics: it is a pleasure to find how familiar he is with Henry James, Edmund Wilson and Frank Kermode, to whose critical insights he turns for a better understanding of certain aspects of D'Annunzio.

The title of Vittorio Vettori's book is misleading, because it seems to indicate that its subject is the influence of Nietzsche on D'Annunzio, whereas in fact the book consists of two separate sections, one on the German philosopher and the other on the Italian poet, without any real connection between them. A diligent review of the development and success of Nietzsche's doctrine is followed by a rather sketchy examination of D'Annunzio's work and its fortune; an appendix reprints articles by Panzini, Piovone, Carriari and Bargellini, a chapter from a book by G. Velpe, and four brief essays, this time by Vettori himself, on the relations between D'Annunzio and Proust, Drieu La Rochelle, Mauriac and De Chirico: all this is very interesting, but has nothing to do with the theme announced by the title.

D'Annunzio was to some extent predestined to become addicted to the Nietzschean drug: even in his teens he was a sort of provincial Nietzschean. The discovery of Zarathustra only served to crystallize tendencies already present in him. Whether this was to the advantage of his art is debatable and in fact the recent Pescara Conference on *Trilogia della morte* mostly concerned itself with this very problem. Vettori does not even mention it, although his admiration for D'Annunzio's military and political activity implies an appreciation of the "superhuman" side of the poet which contrasts sharply with Raimondi's preference for the "undisguised" D'Annunzio.

One of the "soldier-poet's" most celebrated exploits is the principal subject of the correspondence between D'Annunzio and Consorzio Ciano (the father of Mussolini's Foreign Secretary and son-in-law) which has now been published by the

Vittoriale Foundation. It ranges from 1918, when D'Annunzio participated in Ciano's raid on the Austrian port of Buccari where some enemy ships were torpedoed, practically to the eve of the poet's death. It contains, as might be expected, much rhetoric, glorification of this daring but not very effective exploit (the battleship was sunk), relieved here and there by sparks of a poetical imagination on the decline. What is more relevant is the confirmation contained in these letters to a high Fascist leader, of D'Annunzio's impatience with both Mussolini and Fascism. "I cannot breathe, in this stink of human consciousness" (so allusive to the Duce's growing popularity, in 1924); "I referred to the Head of the Government my active friendship. He rejects it, alas, without elegance"; "I shall celebrate the first of April as the true National Day of the new Italy". It has often been said that D'Annunzio had no sense of humour; but this last quotation is creditable. Even more creditable is another, inspired by the appointment of Ciano to be Postmaster-General: "You now become my colleague also as a man of letters."

Another little-known aspect of D'Annunzio's personality that shows through in this correspondence is his human side. Many of his humble followers of earlier times - the soldiers who had met him in the trenches, the volunteers whom he had led to him to his age of retirement, seeking his powerful protection in order to obtain a job, a promotion, a pension. They regularly addressed him as *Comandante* (commander), the naval title that he liked and by which he was usually described after the war. Well, the *Comandante* always took great pains to satisfy the petitioners. Not that the term *Comandante* means much nowadays. When the excellent actress, Piers Degli Esposti, was congratulated by a dignitary from the Vittoriale after interpreting the title role in *La figlia di Jorio*, and was told: "The performance was superb. Ah, and why did he not come?" She would not have made that gaffe if D'Annunzio had been described as "the poet". The *Comandante* is dead, but the poet lives.

It is such a climate of thought that is barely surprising that there has been a reawakening of interest in other authors whose work was regarded as a reaction to the *Weltanschauung* of Nietzsche, and who were not regarded with quite the same veneration. Georg Simmel is certainly one such thinker, whose writings hold more surprises for anyone who might tend to think of him as strictly a second-hand material. Simmel's work has not been without influence in the Anglo-Saxon literature. Some of his articles were published in early issues of the *American Journal of Sociology*, and Robert Park and Louis Wirth, two of the founders of Chicago Sociology, drew upon his writings in their own formulations, especially in respect of their theories of urbanism. The first substantial translation of Simmel into English, comprising sections of his *Sociologie* and a few other fragments, did not appear until 1950. Although *Sociologie* in its original edition is so important part of Simmel's corpus, and to some extent reflects his characteristic misunderstandings of his ideas, he became used as an advocate of "formal sociology", a rather dry version of social analysis in which the object of study is to uncover the universal "forms" of social life. Since English-speaking readers usually knew rather little of the diversity of content which Simmel put into his forms, this sort of standpoint did not attract many adherents.

Maguire has made a workmanlike job of translating the Russian text, which at times he has had to adapt and expand. He has added his own fuller notes to those of Glippus, providing a scholarly commentary which corrects many of the errors in the original text, and although Glippus' scholarship has moved on since 1924, Maguire has retained the translation to update Glippus' work. The appearance of this scholarly translation of a critical classic can only be welcomed by all those interested in Russian literature and in one of the greatest, and most enigmatic, of its geniuses.

Of others, even mere enumeration of titles, may serve to disorient the author rather than put him in focus. Glippus himself admits: "the task of picking out western parallels to *The Portrait* is very rewarding, but of little value."

Glippus' scholarship may have determined his critical approach, which is to suggest that Gogol's art derives from literature and not from life. Yet the critic to Glippus was not happy with such an extreme position. Time and again he returns to a theme which he never develops: Gogol's writing as an expression of his psychological drives. Thus, commenting on Gogol's rejection of the theatrical convention of anonymous intrigue, Glippus concludes: "It is essential to recognize that there is a hidden psychological reason why Gogol departed so decisively from the tradition in just this respect: a reason which biography, psychology and psychopathology have so far been incapable of revealing in all its aspects". Since Glippus wrote this, much critical attention has been paid to the psychological implications of Gogol's writing, and to particular to this very aspect, characterized by Hugh MacLennan as Gogol's "flight from love".

Bias towards the literary springs of Gogol's art leads Glippus to an original interpretation of the writer's intentions for the second part of *Dead Souls*. He is prepared to believe Gogol's "explanation" that the second burning of the manuscript was a mistake, but less inclined to

The flux of the real

By Anthony Giddens

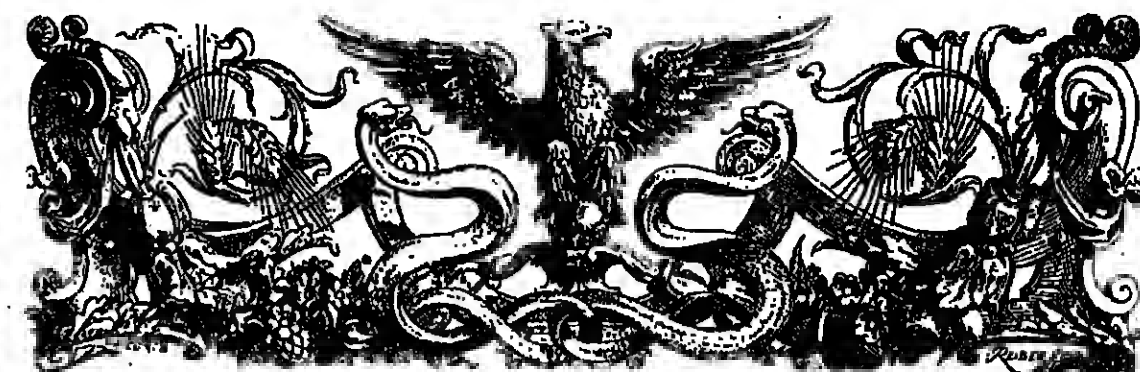
DAVID FRISBY:
Sociological Impressionism
A Reassessment of Georg Simmel's
Social Theory
190pp. Heinemann. £16.
0 435 82320 5

This is a time of rediscovery in social theory. Now that we are released from the grip of the idea that the object of social science should be to copy the methods and outlook of the natural sciences, previously ignored traditions of thought have acquired a new prominence. Few many of those concerned with social theory, in the English-speaking world at any time, had even heard of "hermeneutics" a few years ago? How many would have accepted that aesthetics, or the philosophy of language and action, had any particular relevance to the concerns of the social sciences? Today the hermeneutic tradition has become a focus of debate, and those interested in social theory dabbling in all sorts of ideas that previous they would have left well alone. If lesser-known traditions of thought have gained new life, however, so too has scholarship into the work of those whose writings have been regarded as of continuing relevance to contemporary problems of social analysis. New books on Marx appear almost every week. Many may amount to nothing more than yet another journey across umbilically familiar terrain, but the standards of scholarly endeavour, among those who read and against Marx, is far higher than it was; and "Marxism" now is a highly variegated body of thought, certainly in some respects at the cutting-edge of current advances in social theory.

Durkheim and Max Weber are the others in prima position to the classical pantheon of social theorists. In their case also there has been an impressive amount of fruitful scholarly work in recent years, not all of it merely descriptive or didactic. The language of a Centre d'Etudes Durkheimiennes in Paris attests to a reawakening of interest in Durkheim in his country of origin. In Germany, as elsewhere, Weber's work has become the object of new-found attention and, as always, controversy. At least some of these on the Left seem to have ceased to regard him as a reactionary dullard, whose attempts to understand the origins and nature of modern capitalism are trivial, or uninteresting where they do not conform to the views of Marx. Moreover, in the writings of Wolfgang Iser, and others, certain of Weber's ideas have been employed in a genuinely innovative way.

It is such a climate of thought that is barely surprising that there has been a reawakening of interest in other authors whose work was regarded as a reaction to the *Weltanschauung* of Nietzsche, and who were not regarded with quite the same veneration. Georg Simmel is certainly one such thinker, whose writings hold more surprises for anyone who might tend to think of him as strictly a second-hand material. Simmel's work has not been without influence in the Anglo-Saxon literature. Some of his articles were published in early issues of the *American Journal of Sociology*, and Robert Park and Louis Wirth, two of the founders of Chicago Sociology, drew upon his writings in their own formulations, especially in respect of their theories of urbanism. The first substantial translation of Simmel into English, comprising sections of his *Sociologie* and a few other fragments, did not appear until 1950. Although *Sociologie* in its original edition is so important part of Simmel's corpus, and to some extent reflects his characteristic misunderstandings of his ideas, he became used as an advocate of "formal sociology", a rather dry version of social analysis in which the object of study is to uncover the universal "forms" of social life. Since English-speaking readers usually knew rather little of the diversity of content which Simmel put into his forms, this sort of standpoint did not attract many adherents.

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psychological or even metaphysical preoccupations."

The *Philosophy of Money* is Simmel's most substantial and coherent single work. But is not at all an easy book to read, and Simmel himself was never satisfied with its structure, even after reorganizing it several times. He suggested to a friend that the best way to tackle the book might be to start with the final chapter, leaving through other parts until interesting sections caught the eye. Simmel was above all a stylist, the author of a bewildering variety of monographs and articles. He did not set out to build a systematic social theory: indeed he often concerned himself with punctuating the ambitions of system-builders. The diversity of his writings - the feature that seemed most characteristic of Simmel to his contemporaries - presents a different picture to that held by those who only know of his work via the English version of *Sociologie*. Simmel was as much philosopher and aesthete as sociologist. He wrote on the philosophy of history, on epistemology, and on the theory of culture; on topics in psychology, music, education and religion; and he also produced a variety of studies of particular philosophers and artists, most notably perhaps of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Goethe, and Rembrandt.

What held this very considerable diversity of topics together? A method, certainly, but not one concerned to develop general laws dealing with the forms of social organization. Simmel's favourite terms to describe the core of his concerns were *Vergegenständlichung* and *Wechselwirkung*, neither of which is easily rendered into English. The first has an active connotation, and has sometimes been translated as "socialization". In preferring it to *Gesellschaft*, "society", Simmel emphasizes that social relations are constantly in process, coming into being and dissolving. The second term, which means something like "reciprocal exchange", is used to refer to the inter-related character of all modes of human activity and types of culture. The apparently trivial cultural object, or fleeting social encounter, may demonstrate as much about wider social totalities as seemingly more weighty phenomena.

Over the past four or five years, several new translations of Simmel have appeared in English, providing a more adequate sample of his ideas than was previously available. These

include *The Philosophy of Money*, of which David Frisby was co-translator. His participation in this enterprise, Frisby admits, helped change his pre-existing view of Simmel as a "formal sociologist"; and it would offer a new interpretation for the English-speaking reader. *Sociological Impressionism* is the result. His book does not claim to give an encyclopedic coverage of Simmel's work. Rather, Frisby seeks to convey a sense of its main themes, trying to demonstrate that, appropriately understood, these held a good deal of interest for students of social theory today.

According to Frisby, Simmel can be regarded as a "sociological flâneur" - a stroller on the sidewalk of history. Frisby does not use this term with derogatory intent, but in order to draw a link between Simmel

of sociology, as Comte and Durkheim did, in an organic unity of society; the sociological approach, in his view, is rather a mode of analysing historical materials. Sociology "must concern itself with sociology of the most diverse levels and types".

The *Philosophy of Money* is the work in which Simmel appears to come closest to discussing a distinct "type" of society: modern capitalism. Characteristically, however, he avoids linking his discussion distinctively with capitalism. Although his conception of the prevalence of the commodity form has direct implications for a social critique, he does not spell them out. He retains, Frisby suggests, his role of detached observer, of *flâneur*; not the detachment of the objective scientist, but of the impressionist painter. An aesthetic stance thus pervades work, which on the face of it is about that

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Simmel's philosophy of existence, in Frisby's interpretation, involves two main elements. One is a conception of the alienation of culture; but this is linked to a distinctive "perspectivism". The alienation of culture - epitomized by money, which can represent everything but is itself nothing - Simmel sees as an apparently irreversible trend in the modern epoch. The expansion of the money economy expresses a process of estrangement between human beings and their cultural products which, Simmel says, "confronts the individual in the same way as fate confronts the instability and irregularity of our will". We can escape such estrangement not by an institutional transformation such as proposed by Marxists, but by creating private spheres of subjectivity, in the protection and enrichment of self.

What Simmel in his later writings refers to as "the tragedy of culture" is not confined to the present day, although it finds its most acute expression there. All culture, he seems to argue, insofar as it assumes a fixed, becomes alienated from the movement or process inherent in human life in "sociality". This distance from the object, paradoxically, is the source of aesthetic feeling. The distancing of the individual from cultural products, Frisby suggests, in aid of itself implies a "perspectivist" stance. For Simmel, there is no fixed point or perspective from which reality can be apprehended. This does not imply a relativism in which there are countless "realities", but represents a particular version of Hegelianism. No totality can be directly grasped conceptually, but only in shifting perspectives that change in relation to the flux of the real. We have come a long way, in this analysis, from "formal sociology". What have been seen by many interpreters of Simmel as fixed, immutable forms imposed on history, are perhaps more accurately understood as mutable perspectives reflecting ceaseless change.

"Not a single line," of *The Philosophy of Money*, in Simmel's own words, is about economics. Money exemplifies relations "increasingly found in many realms of modern culture; it is its symbolic significance which preoccupies him, as a modality of 'reciprocal exchange'". Money both gives us a clue to the foundation of socialization in exchange, and at the same time - 'lo' - developed, money economy - shows one particular form of such exchange. It has no intrinsic value, it acquires value only as a medium of exchange; it is pure exchange-value. As such it expresses a universal property of all socialization. But the expansion of the role of money in different societies produces a "quantification" of social relations, a transformation of the qualitative into the quantitative. It is not difficult to see similarities between Simmel's analysis in *The Philosophy of Money* and Benjamin's discussion of the fate of art in an age of mechanical reproduction and of course the influence of Simmel upon Lukács is well-documented. However, as Frisby points out, Simmel treats money as exemplifying exchange-value in the context of the class relations of capitalist enterprise, this view is radically divergent from that of Marx.

Simmel's fondness for the essay seemed to many of his contemporaries, and to other interpreters since, to be a basic source of weakness. He may be dazzling in the range of subjects to which he applied his talents, but perhaps the result is superficiality without substance? Borrowing from Adorno, Frisby makes an interesting, and to my mind persuasive case to the contrary. The essay

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The *Philosophy of Money* is the work in which Simmel appears to come closest to discussing a distinct "type" of society: modern capitalism. Characteristically, however, he avoids linking his discussion distinctively with capitalism. Although his conception of the prevalence of the commodity form has direct implications for a social critique, he does not spell them out. He retains, Frisby suggests, his role of detached observer, of *flâneur*; not the detachment of the objective scientist, but of the impressionist painter. An aesthetic stance thus pervades work, which on the face of it is about that

Simmel's philosophy of existence, in Frisby's interpretation, involves two main elements. One is a conception of the alienation of culture; but this is linked to a distinctive "perspectivism". The alienation of culture - epitomized by money, which can represent everything but is itself nothing - Simmel sees as an apparently irreversible trend in the modern epoch. The expansion of the money economy expresses a process of estrangement between human beings and their cultural products which, Simmel says, "confronts the individual in the same way as fate confronts the instability and irregularity of our will". We can escape such estrangement not by an institutional transformation such as proposed by Marxists, but by creating private spheres of subjectivity, in the protection and enrichment of self.

What Simmel in his later writings refers to as "the tragedy of culture" is not confined to the present day, although it finds its most acute expression there. All culture, he seems to argue, insofar as it assumes a fixed, becomes alienated from the movement or process inherent in human life in "sociality". This distance from the object, paradoxically, is the source of aesthetic feeling. The distancing of the individual from cultural products, Frisby suggests, in aid of itself implies a "perspectivist" stance. For Simmel, there is no fixed point or perspective from which reality can be apprehended. This does not imply a relativism in which there are countless "realities", but represents a particular version of Hegelianism. No totality can be directly grasped conceptually, but only in shifting perspectives that change in relation to the flux of the real. We have come a long way, in this analysis, from "formal sociology". What have been seen by many interpreters of Simmel as fixed, immutable forms imposed on history, are perhaps more accurately understood as mutable perspectives reflecting ceaseless change.

"There is a great deal of interest in Frisby's book. Much of what he has to say about the interpretation of Simmel's writings seems to me correct, and the book makes a valuable contribution to recovering Simmel as a thinker whose ideas have relevance to current debates in social theory. However, it is also a little disappointing. There are more deeply embedded inconsistencies and ambiguities in Simmel's writings than Frisby appears to acknowledge. He blithely at various criticisms of Simmel's work, but these are not developed. A critical discussion of Simmel, in the light of the trends in social theory I referred to at the beginning of this review, would have given the book more substance and appeal. Nonetheless, it is an important contribution to the literature of social theory."

God's mouthpiece

By R. A. Peace

V. V. GLIPPUS:
Gogol
Edited and translated by Robert A. Maguire
216pp. Ann Arbor: Ardis. \$9.60.
0 82333 612 6

Gogol is notoriously elusive both as man and writer, and Robert Maguire has already provided one of the best accounts of this diversity of Gogol criticism in his introduction to the anthology *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*. The monograph which he has now translated dates from 1924. It makes a perfunctory nod to the *Mandarin* and the *Formalism* of its day, but then pursues its own independent course. Glippus provides no detailed biography of Gogol, but relates the turning-points in his life to his artistic development. He shows that, from the first, Gogol was aware of his high calling and that literature was only one of the avenues he considered. He tends to minimize the absurdity of Gogol's appointment to St Petersburg University as a lecturer in history (it was not to the chair, as Glippus asserts), but draws interesting parallels between his "academic" and "literary" writings.

After the production of his play *The Government Inspector*, Gogol spent twelve years abroad, making his last visit to his native Ukraine in the mid-1830s. It is interesting to note that

critics interpreted the novel as an indictment of serfdom, they were soon to be disillusioned by *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (1847). The critic Belinsky, Gogol's staunchest champion, wrote a blistering attack on this work in a letter which has entered literary history, and Gogol's Slavophile friends were also embarrassed by its extreme conservatism and religiosity. Its art seemed to regard himself as the chosen mouthpieces of God, and his plans for the continuation of *Dead Souls* were conditioned by his sense of a prophetic role. The completed manuscript of Part II of the work was twice burned. The second occasion coincided with the rapid fall by which Gogol chose to end his life.

Glippus's suggestion that Gogol's "aesthetic individualism" turned into "moral individualism" may be open to dispute, but (whether consciously or not) the scheme parallels the philosophical development of Belinsky during the 1830s - and with him that of a whole generation, meeting Hegel, Belinsky's initial Hegelianism implied total acceptance of the *status quo* - a position not unlike that of Gogol in *Selected Passages* - and the critic's wrath may in part have been kindled by a sense of rejecting a former aberration of his own. The parallel is not developed by Glippus, and Maguire's assertion that Belinsky's "golden period coincided with the early days of Gogol's life in the mid-1830s" is incorrect.

Maguire is correct, however, in maintaining that Glippus's study is

one of the classics of Russian Gogol criticism. It was for this reason that Brown University issued a reprint of the original in 1963, and in his introduction to that edition Donald Fanger commended Glippus both as critic and scholar. The distinction is worth making: for the book's strength derives principally from its author's scholarship. As one of the editors of the Academy of Sciences' four-volume edition of Gogol's works, Glippus had a detailed knowledge of archival material and early drafts. He combined this with an impressive knowledge of Gogol's literary contemporaries and precursors, both Russian and Western European, and assessed the influence of the Ukrainian puppet theatre and the Ukrainian plays of Gogol's own father.

This double scholarly approach has much to recommend it, but there are dangers. Archive sources may divert the critical gaze from the writing itself to the waste-paper basket. Glippus's use of such material is always intelligent, and he criticizes V. V. Rozanov for the "major error" of regarding the hero of *The Overcoat* as an amplification of the civil servant, portrayed in an earlier draft. Nevertheless, given the size of the study, a surprising amount of attention is paid to fragments, minor works and drafts. His evaluation of literary parallels also presents problems. If such evaluation is to be useful, detailed analysis is called for. Glippus largely neglects it. In his detailed analysis of the works

of others, even mere enumeration of titles, may serve to disorient the author rather than put him in focus. Glippus himself admits: "the task of picking out western parallels to *The Portrait* is very rewarding, but of little value."

Glippus' scholarship may have determined his critical approach, which is to suggest that Gogol's art derives from literature and not from life. Yet the critic to Glippus was not happy with such an extreme position. Time and again he returns to a theme which he never develops: Gogol's writing as an expression of his psychological drives. Thus, commenting on Gogol's rejection of the theatrical convention of anonymous intrigue, Glippus concludes: "It is essential to recognize that there is a hidden psychological reason why Gogol departed so decisively from the tradition in just this respect: a reason which biography, psychology and psychopathology have so far been incapable of revealing in all its aspects". Since Glippus wrote this, much critical attention has been paid to the psychological implications of Gogol's writing, and to particular to this very aspect, characterized by Hugh MacLennan as Gogol's "flight from love".

Bias towards the literary springs of Gogol's art leads Glippus to an original interpretation of the writer's intentions for the second part of *Dead Souls*. He is prepared to believe Gogol's "explanation" that the second burning of the manuscript was a mistake, but less inclined to

Parliamentary prototypes

By E. B. Fryde

H. G. RICHARDSON and G. O. SAYLES
The English Parliament in the Middle Ages
399pp. Hambledon Press. £24.
0 9506821 5

R. G. DAVIES and J. H. DENTON (Editors)
The English Parliament in the Middle Ages
A tribute to J. S. Roskell
214pp. Manchester University Press. £13.95.
0 7190 0833 6

When this reviewer was starting his postgraduate research his supervisor advised him "to read all those things by Richardson and Sayles". It required some weeks to find and master them. One greatly appreciates the enterprise of the Hambledon Press in republishing in a single volume an excellent selection, twenty-six in number, of the parliamentary articles (and a few others) of these two scholars. G.O. Sayles has added a brief preface and provided additional bibliographical notes and other corrections at the end of each article to bring them up to date.

Richardson and Sayles are contentious scholars, and the polemical aspect is to the fore in the essays reprinted here. There is certainly a need for vigorous debates on medieval institutions and politics: Richardson and Sayles have stimulated controversies that have increased our knowledge and understanding of medieval parliaments. The form and wording of some of their polemical broadsides is regrettable, especially as they occasionally blur the main outlines of what they are trying to prove. They have been prone to state hostility and to believe that their views were ignored by other scholars who, in reality, greatly appreciate their erudition and are ready to accept some of their suggestions but who remain perplexed by the uncertainties of the evidence or have somewhat different priorities.

The volume starts with one of Richardson's earliest articles, the "Origins of Parliament" (1982), which remains compulsory reading for all students of medieval parliamentary institutions. Richardson was reminding his British readers, who have been too insular about this, that similar institutions were developing in the middle of the thirteenth century elsewhere in western Europe, and especially in France. He suggested, though without pressing this point, that the French developments were known to Henry III of England and his advisers. The same comparative interest reappeared in almost every article of Richardson and Sayles on Scottish and Irish parliaments of Edward I.

Between 1928 and 1937 came a series of valuable studies, carefully reprinted here, of the early parliamentary rolls and other record sources for parliamentary history from 1258 to 1377. They culminated in 1954 in the masterly articles on the "Early Statutes", critically reviewing the sources of our texts down to 1377. A parallel series of articles, discussing some of the less well-known aspects of the functioning of parliament during the same period, concentrating on the indispensable role of the royal officials and judges.

None the less it is hard to praise this collection of articles, unreservedly. Some of the central assumptions of Richardson and Sayles are shared by many other historians. The two authors firmly believe that the early parliaments are of one kind only and that, when we have stripped every non-essential away, the essence of them is the dispensing of justice by the king (1928). In a series of reiterations of this central contention they have never faced up to some of the most cogent criticisms, notably by the late Sir Geoffrey Edwards, showing that English parliaments were not essentially law-making institutions. They have also not faced up to the evidence that, in the early period, the king's court was a more important institution than the parliament, and that the king's court was a more important institution than the parliament, and that the king's court was a more important institution than the parliament.

there was a clear distinction between parliaments and some other, purely consultative assemblies. In 1325 a royal memorandum, which has surprisingly escaped their notice, differentiated quite clearly between a consultative assembly, which Edward I preferred, and a proper parliament, which he did not want, when he wrote that the magnates should be summoned "pur conseller et non pur parlement". But many historians would not be prepared to follow Richardson and Sayles in confidently asserting that they knew what was "the essence" of a true parliament.

John Roskell's contribution to the history of English parliament in the later Middle Ages is certainly much less controversial. His pupils and friends have commemorated his retirement from university teaching by publishing a complete bibliography of his writings and by bringing together seven studies which critically survey the present state of our knowledge. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive history of parliament, though some of them come near to doing so, notably A.L. Brown's lucid and subtle account of the years 1377-1422. As

Reforming zeal

By Peter Hunter Blair

DOROTHY WHITELOCK
History, Law and Literature in 10th-11th Century England
368pp. London: Variorum Reprints. £22.
0 86078 074 0

Referring to her predecessor in the Cambridge Chair - Skeat, Chadwick and Dickens - Dorothy Whitelock remarked in her inaugural lecture, delivered in 1958, "I am conscious that my range is narrower than theirs". Almost twenty-five years later, as we look at the second volume of her collected papers, and what what she has done, it is clear that she was the greatest of her works, her *Life of Alfred the Great*, we may question whether this will be the judgment of posterity. The range covered in the first volume of reprints extended from Bede to Alfred. This second volume comprises seventeen papers extending in date of original publication from 1937, with a note on Wulfstan's career, to 1976 with the introduction to her revised edition of Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* of which the first edition had appeared in 1939.

All seventeen of these papers concern aspects of English history in the tenth and eleventh centuries. There are one or two of general historical interest and others which use the evidence of numismatics and personal names to make historical points, but the dominant theme of the whole collection is that of the Anglo-Saxon Church in the last hundred years of the great Benedictine revival inaugurated in the times and through the agency of Dunstan, Athelwold and Oswald, two of these reformers are the subject of detailed studies - the appointment of Dunstan as Archbishop of Canterbury, and the claiming of Athelwold as author of an Old English account of King Edgar's establishment of monasteries.

Yet if the dominant theme is that of the reforming Anglo-Saxon Church, following the first age of the Viking assault upon England, the dominant personality in that of Wulfstan the Homilist, who was bishop first of London and then holder in plural of the see of Worcester and of the archbishopric of York, and who lived through the second great Viking assault. As Professor Whitelock shows in her paper on "The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northmen in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", first published in the book of essays presented to her predecessor, Brooks Dickens, such pluralities, which might have seemed an anomaly in other ages, was in no way incompatible with Wulfstan's own reforming zeal, since it was dictated in part by the need to support the York archbishopric impoverished by Viking

was to be expected, the late A.R. Myers provided an excellent discussion at the complex changes in legislative procedures between the late fourteenth century and the Tudor period.

One of Roskell's most perceptive articles was his "Perspectives in English parliamentary history" (1964), in which he argued that we have to wait until 1689 to see parliament established as an indispensable institution. From this springs the most far-ranging of the present collection of studies, D.H. Pennington's "A seventeenth century perspective", which provides an excellent introduction to the volume as a whole. The strength of the remaining six articles lies in careful surveys of what the hitherto discovered evidence can tell us about the composition and functioning of parliaments from their first appearance in the thirteenth century down to the reign of Henry VIII. J.C. Holt's "Prehistory of Parliament" is a model of its kind in summing up all that is known about the motives of thirteenth-century rulers for summoning local representatives to central assemblies. The same line of inquiry is pursued by J.R. Maddicott in "Parliament and the constituencies, 1272-1377". A study of the "Clergy and Parliament in the thirteenth century" by J. H. Denton deals with an obscure and unduly neglected topic, though it must be admitted that it raises rather than answers questions. The three central articles of G.L. Harris, A.L. Brown and A.R. Myers survey the development of parliament between 1272 and 1509.

The nature of our evidence makes much of this story very formal. The movement of ideas is mostly hidden from us. Most of the time we know very little about what really went on in parliamentary assemblies. Much unpublished material is cited in these articles, notably a fascinating collection of "ancient petitions" used by Dr. Mendicott, but the records can still yield much more of human interest.

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There are some among the Anglo-Saxons, such men as Cuthbert, Dunstan and Edward the Confessor, who cannot easily be detached from the cocoon of hagiographical embroidery in which they are embedded, while there are others, such as Bede, Offa and Athelwold the Unready whose lack of a biographer we may lament but who, nevertheless, may emerge as the more real personalities because we can know them only by their fruits. Wulfstan the Homilist belongs to this latter group. Once regarded as "the author of a gloomy jeremiad to whose name a number of spurious writings had happened to be attached, he is now seen as a scholar learned in continental ecclesiastical writings, a prolific author, a great stylist and an outstanding political personage" whose influence upon Cnut may have prevented the Danish conquest from being a total disaster

Costly crown

By G. M. Wilson

MICHAEL SENIOR
The Life and Times of Richard II
222pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £7.50.
0 297 77925 3

Michael Senior's biography of Richard II is the latest in the largely admirable "Kings and Queens of England" series, edited by Antonia Fraser. The personality of Richard is something of an enigma, and a book of this length and scope can do little other than give a brief and incomplete account of his life and times. The young king, "at the age of only a young man's age, but even so, Richard, who came to the throne when he was ten and was deposed at the early age of thirty-three, was a very youthful king. The popular image of him is that of the Willon Diptych, and of the panel portrait in Westminster Abbey, both of which show him as a sensitive and rather frail youth. He is still in bone structure as well as in his youthfulness and his rich clothes all on him heavily" writes Mr. Senior. But to present Richard as a sensitive and frail youth is a misleading impression. The crown prince, as he was, was the mature man of his later years, complete with the beginnings of a double chin, and when his skeleton was examined in 1871 it was

found to be that of a man almost six feet tall, above average for his time. Nevertheless, even his contemporaries often commented upon his youth and inexperience. John Gower, for instance, once described him as "an undisciplined youth who neglects the moral precepts by which he might grow from a boy to a man". It is certainly true, as Senior shows, that he often displayed the characteristics of youth and inexperience, especially in his prodigality and his sudden fits of temper, but, on the other hand, he often showed a maturity of judgment and a shrewdness which belied his supposed immaturity. During his years of personal rule after 1369, for instance, his policy of establishing peace with France was both bold and far-sighted for the war was now costing the crown enormous sums of money and Richard was in considerable financial difficulties. Indeed it was money, or the lack of it, that lay at the root of many of his problems, and Senior is right to stress that Richard's seizure of the Lancastrian inheritance on the death of John of Gaunt, which precipitated his downfall, was largely dictated by his need to make the crown solvent. However, Senior perhaps gives rather too little weight to the other factors which led to open rebellion in 1399, chief amongst which was surely the radical extension of royal powers, especially after 1397, which virtually made Richard a tyrant who threatened the liberties of his subjects.

Some of the parliamentary transactions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries seem to anticipate the dramatic "winning of the initiative" by the House of Commons under the early Stuarts. But Dr Pennington, citing the earlier studies in this volume, wisely warns us against exaggerating the "modernity" of the late medieval parliamentary conflicts. "One great source of parliamentary power (under Charles I) had no medieval precedent: whatever the sins of Plantagenet and Lancastrian kings, they were not in league with Satan. In the early seventeenth century the distinction between the pope and the devil could be left to theologians; to the MPs there was now a sacred duty to protect the nation against evil."

thus Dorothy Whitelock's judgment in 1958. The groundwork upon which this assessment rested then, and even more securely now, was laid primarily, though not exclusively, by three scholars, Dorothy Bethurum with *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (1957), Karl Joshi with his edition of *The Institutes of Polity* (1959), and Professor Whitelock herself.

Wulfstan left behind him an ill reputation in Worcester, or so twelfth-century writers would have us believe, yet we do not know the ground of his hostility. What York thought of him there is no evidence to show. In Ely, where he died and was buried in 1023, his reputation stood high and it is to Ely that we owe our first account of him, but that no earlier than the twelfth century. He was no worker of miracles in his lifetime, no candidate for canonization after his death, and he is only rarely mentioned in ecclesiastical history. The canon of his work has had to be established mainly on grounds of style, vocabulary and syntactical mannerisms, the range of his scholarship by examining what sources he used, and his influence as a statesman by studying the codes of law in which his strong hand can be

traced during the reigns of both Æthelred the Unready and Cnut. We can see him now as a man of great reforming zeal, as a master of impassioned denunciation, as one deeply concerned with order secured by law in a society which seemed to him to be disintegrating under the repeated assaults of the Vikings, seen by him as divine retribution for the sins at the age. Though he had read widely in the works of both English and Carolingian scholars his concern was not with theology, but with the immediate evils of the age in which he lived, an age which witnessed the murder of an archbishop of Canterbury by drunken Vikings who beat him to death on a Saturday night with axes - we all know of Becket, but how many of Ælfheah?

Yet this portrait of a great man rests on the secure identification of his homilies, his law codes, his manuscripts, and this in turn has followed nearly a century of historical and linguistic scholarship such as Dorothy Whitelock has always demanded from herself and such as is abundantly displayed in these collected papers. They will be valued no less for the conclusions which they establish than for the methods of scholarship which they display.

lois with a standing army, partial justice, and arbitrary taxes. "In general, however, Senior's book is a good and reliable introduction to Richard's reign. There are occasional stylistic lapses, and some oversimplifications which are perhaps inevitable given the shortness of the text. The results can be unfortunate. Occasionally, for instance, instead of short pen-portraits of important figures, these are dismissed in two or three words: thus "Edward II is 'weak and foolish', but Edward III 'a splendid man'. The many illustrations, largely in black and white, are all of interest and, although the quality of the reproduction is very variable, they certainly enhance the book.

Michael Grant's lavishly illustrated *Downfall of the Middle Ages* (224pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £20.00) 1976 (2nd ed.) covers the period between 1476 and 1516 with particular attention to art. The book is divided into five sections: "The Age Called 'Dark'", "The Byzantine Empire, The Expansion of Islam, The German Kingdoms, The Jews in Asia and Europe, Peoples of the North and From Europe to the Far East, and included an epilogue in which are listed important developments that can be said to have exercised a great effect on the immediate future. Events such as the completion of the Taj Mahal, the foundation of St. Benedict's monastery at Monte Cassino and the coming into power of the Tang dynasty.

DAVID HOWARTH
The Voyage of the Armada
The Spanish Story
256pp. Collins. £8.95.
0 00 211575 1

The Armada, "La Felicissima Armada", "La Armada Invencible", not just any old Spanish fleet, has left its impact on most Anglo-American minds as a landmark in English and Spanish history. We are, many of us - in spite of Garrett Mattingly's excellent book, *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, which first appeared in 1959 - conditioned to some extent by a simplified orthodox enshrined in so many textbooks and even monographs of the past. The fleet came into view as an enormous array of warships moving inexorably up the English Channel, being damaged by the unceasing fire of small English ships, but reaching Calais Roads when, almost ready to transport an invading army to conquer England, it was thrown into panic by a few English fire-ships and then destroyed in battle by an English navy inferior in numbers and guns to the Spaniards, though aided by small armed merchant vessels. It took refuge in flight and, sailing round Scotland and Ireland, lost so many more of its ships that King Philip was forced in his abetment to overthrow Queen Elizabeth I by the efforts of Sir Francis Drake and a few other dimly known English sailors, together with some fortuitous help from the weather. Some of the blame for this on the Spanish side lay with the choice of a commander, Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, Duke of Medina Sidonia, who was no seaman and whose incapacity played a part in the Spanish defeat. But English sea-power was somehow born of these events and flourished until it became a world power thereafter.

This simple story now seems very much of a caricature and has been drastically modified in the past twenty years or so. Mattingly's book has been followed soon after by Michael Lewis's *The Spanish Armada* (1960) and *Armada Civilis* (1963), which have remained authoritative on the English sea forces and their armament if not on the Armada itself or on a number of aspects of the campaign. David Howarth holds the view that most accounts of the campaign have taken the English side of the affair more sympathetically and fully than the Spanish, and he has written *The Voyage of the Armada: The Spanish Story* to give whatever credit was due to the Spanish soldiers and sailors. He disdains any attempt to put the voyage in a wider context and aims to tell "what happened on the voyage that began in May and ended in September, and the little that the soldiers and sailors knew of the reasons why they went". It might be argued that he takes rather a long time to get the Armada to sea and devotes a rather brief two chapters to its progress up the Channel, though other aspects are dealt with more fully. He is at home in writing about the sea, and does so effectively; indeed, once he gets the fleet to sea his narrative gains strength and credibility and the final sections are well told.

When it comes to content there are, however, gains and losses to record. His narrative is fleshed out with translations from the Spanish, giving something more of the late sixteenth-century published documents, with a few subsequent additions to them, than we have had hitherto. These, if adding only a little to our knowledge, do partly justify his claim to have given the Spaniards a better, or at least fuller, showing than they have had in some English books, though the reader will find through Loughton (1894), Corbett (1898), on down to Mattingly, Lewis and others, extensive use made of most of these materials. Caserio Fernández Duro's *La Armada Invencible* (1884) remained for them, and now for Howarth, an essential source, even if he has culled from it in English a few more narrative passages, which are of

human interest and, perhaps, of historical value. But he does not seem to be familiar with published Spanish sources which would have given him more of the same: to mention only two, Gabriel Maura Camaza, duque de Maura's *El designio de Felipe II y el episodio de la Armada Invencible* (Madrid, 1937), from Medina Sidonia's incomplete family archives, and Enrique Herrera y Oria, *La Armada Invencible* (Madrid, 1929), whose documentary collection extends that of Duro appreciably. Howarth has indeed gained much from the description of the wrecks of the Spanish ships on Scottish and Irish shores, the work of underwater archaeologists working closely with manuscript sources in Spain which he has not himself explored. Thanks to several exciting books and much television coverage, this work has brought the ships and the tragedies of the Armada in defeat sharply before the eyes of a mass audience, so that the present is a good time to attempt to piece the whole story together.

The initial picture Howarth gives of Philip II as the religious fanatic and recluse does less than justice to a monarch who had a very shrewd grasp of politics and strategy.

Howarth can appreciate the value of his advice that the English ships were speedy and their gunners formidable, but he is shocked to find that the letter the Admiral was to give the Duke of Parma, who was to cross the Channel with an invading army, was to make terms with Elizabeth, if possible, on the basis of her giving up support for the Portuguese claimant, Dom Antonio, and for the United Provinces, while granting some (negotiable) concessions for English Catholics, even after Parma had landed and won an initial victory. The Armada and Parma's fine army were at least partly a gigantic bluff - diplomacy by force of apparently invincible arms. This did not rule out the chances of complete victory, the annihilation of the English fleet, the safe transport of Parma's army (reinforced by 6,000 soldiers and a siege train of twenty guns from the Armada) and the capture of London, which could have removed Elizabeth from her throne. But Philip clearly understood the diplomatic card to be the more likely one to play. Howarth quite rightly points out the defects in the instructions to the two commanders as to how they could coordinate their forces, but these could not clearly be foreseen from Spain.

Medina Sidonia, too, is given more of his due than the older stereotypes allowed him, but it is now well known that it was not only

Spaniards at sea

By David Quinn

as the highest grandee in Spain that he was chosen to succeed the designated and deceased commander, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, but because he had shown himself to be a man who had great administrative capacity, not least in organizing the Armada itself, and who could be relied on to take expert advice from naval and military experts on board. His claim to Lisbon that he was too inexperienced to occupy a sea command and his latter from Corunna, where the fleet put in after a storm, that the enterprise should be abandoned, showed not that he shirked his duty but that he did not think the enterprise stood sufficient chance of success to be worth pursuing. It was he who knew best the lack of adequate supplies of stores, ammunition and (we now know) of guns, and knew how unlikely the lightly-built Mediterranean vessels, which made up such a large part of the 131 ships, were to stand up to Atlantic seas. It may be said that Howarth does justice to his success, once he was at sea, as an administrator of the vast convoy which he commanded, as well as to the personal qualities he showed in combat and defeat.

Howarth takes the Armada through its last hectic days of preparation and through its first Atlantic storm and its painful rehabilitation at Corunna with verve and skill. He is well capable too of describing actions at sea, but he is inhibited by several basic misunderstandings of what was planned and accomplished. He cannot understand why the Armada stood in towards the English coast most of the way up Channel and attributes this to a lack of knowledge of the safer approach on the French side. This we can confidently say is nonsense. Every ship's captain was equipped with serviceable sailing directions, a *Derrotero* specially printed for the purpose (which Herrera Oria reprints), which told them in detail how to work up the Channel just as they did, and threw in some useful information about the Bristol Channel and the south of Ireland in case they later had the opportunity to go there.

The plan was clearly to intimidate the English, as indeed the great formation did, whether it was organized like the classic "crescent moon" or in a less stage as Howarth proposes or as I would think of it as a belt, though it did in fact change formation in detail several times. The "wings", with vanguard and rearguard, had throughout to protect a mass of defenceless transports and supply vessels, and varied their formation as seemed appropriate

from time to time. The hope was to catch English ships in small numbers and pound them out of existence so that there would be only a single fleet left to encounter. But many more English ships were met with from Plymouth onwards than had been expected, at first in an unorganized mass, then in groups which parted company to pour shot into the Armada's wings in something like a line-ahead formation made finally, to follow it in four firm squadrons up the Channel until Howard and Drake were able to join Seymour's fleet off Dover and make up an undamaged fleet larger in number than the Armada itself.

This is somewhat hazily brought out, though it does emerge, from Howarth's story. He spends too much time on discussions about whether or not the Armada intended an attack on Plymouth or the occupation of Portsmouth and the Isla de Wight, both of which, in the light of his orders, Medina Sidonia was bound to reject. He does not give enough play to the episodes where the flagship, the San Martin, and other leading galleons of the vanguard sailed ahead of the fleet to herd the wayward vessels on to the wings, which were inclined to trail behind, into some sort of order. But he does stress that all the shot poured by the English into the Armada did rather superficial damage (more than he estimates, I think, but certainly not lethal) and makes the suggestion that the English vessels were using broadsides from their upper tiers of demi-culverins, lighter-shotted and shorter-ranged than the heavier culverins below, and so made less effective impact at extreme range. On the other hand Howarth does not attempt to understand why the Spaniards, when they came up against an old, high-charged galleon like the *Triumph*, found that neither the San Martin nor the heavily armed galleasses were able to pound her to pieces and were indeed repulsed. But in general the account of the up-Channel fight is expert enough on tactics and gives a good impression of the fighting conditions.

It is, however, weakened by one major failure to keep up with recent research. On page 98 Howarth accepts the figures given by Lewis for the Armada's guns, which have been drastically altered by J.A.A. Thompson, on the basis of newly discovered Spanish documents. In *The Mariner's Mirror* in 1975, Thompson completely upsets earlier views on the relative armament of the two forces. Accepting Lewis's figures for English guns, Thompson shows that the Spaniards' armament was very

much less powerful and effective than had been thought, and indeed was considerably inferior to that of the English fleets. The traditional method of Spanish seafighting was to pour in fire on the enemy from close range with heavy guns and then to board. In the Armada campaign her ships totally failed to catch or to batter any English ship whatever. This seemed strange when it was thought that the Armada carried no less than ninety full cannon. It now appears the number was a mere nineteen or twenty, that they comprised the siege train for Parma, and that they were carried on the light Mediterranean vessels - the galleass La Trinidad Valencera, was found to have four of them.

It is true that the Spaniards had many other medium-heavy and medium guns (173) but these proved equally ineffective. Colin Martin, in his *Full Fathom Five* (1975), reports on Stanley Wignall's demonstration that many cannon-balls found in wrecks were defective and liable to shatter on impact (though how far this was generally true is not confirmed) while some of the guns appear to have exploded on use, suggesting that the products of the Lisbon and Malaga foundries (Howarth does not believe there were any Iberian foundries) had not been fully tested. As for long-range iron guns, it seems clear the Armada had a mere twenty-one culverins (against Lewis's figure of 165), while the English had 153, though the Spaniards had 151 (Lewis says 137) of the lighter demi-culverins against 344 in the English fleet. Indeed all the way along the line the English fleet was better gunned, and the long-range guns, especially when used at fairly close quarters, together with the heavy cannon, were able to inflict very serious damage on the Spanish fighting ships off Gravelines. The Spanish galleons of the guard survived even this.

Medina Sidonia hoped it would be possible to round the South Foreland and meet and destroy the whole English fleet in battle at the Downs so that Parma could cross the Channel unimpeded, but the junction of the undamaged English fleets off Dover meant he was stuck in Calais Roads without the capacity to move. He expected Parma to emerge with a guard of war vessels strong enough either to cover his crossing or at least to reinforce him off Calais. Parma could do neither, for if he moved out from Dunkirk his fleet of landing craft could be destroyed by the Dutch. The stalemate leads Howarth to blame Parma for failure to make contact, but three attempts by him to do so (which Howarth ignores) came to nothing. The fire-ships the English sent in at Calais were, in fact, almost harmless. Medina Sidonia expected them but because they came in firing their guns they appeared to be bomb-ships and therefore deadly. Medina Sidonia had given orders for the ships to raise anchors or cut cables and join him at sea. His own San Martin raised her anchors safely, but most of the rest reacted so rapidly as to cut both anchor cables, which was to have had results later on the Irish coast.

Howarth pays tribute to the way in which the admiral gathered round him the most formidable of his ships. With a WNW wind he was unable to assemble more than a part of his fleet, while the lighter converted merchantmen and armaments were scattered and carried slowly towards the sandbanks of the Dutch coast. The main action in the Channel mouth swayed north and south with the tides off Gravelines. In Howarth's account it emerges, in its chaos of guns and smoke, obscurely in general pattern but sharply in detail. At last the English could use their gun power at close quarters and their ship could not only damage the upper works of the towering galleons and kill their men but hold their own. The long-range guns were deadly, at least effective, at close quarters the Spaniards' armament in reply was wholly ineffective. Medals in great numbers, ships pulled

Peonies

The roses are taking over. Their distribution is perfect: you find them in every garden, leaning on hedges, waiting to be admired. They're selected for stamens. They cling to their stalks all summer. Their flowers remain immaculate (You'd think they used glue); the material must be in endless supply: in neck-white and blood. In lip and sunburn, gun-metal, jaundice, bluish. The roses leave nothing to chance. They are a multi-national organization.

And we? No spikes, no drill. No training for survival. No colour range, no stamina. We burst and scatter two weeks later. Our stalks are drooping into a pool of petals. We could do with some thorns, we could do with some thorns. We could do with some thorns. Amateurs, that's what we are. Who wants a peony when he could have a rose?

Laurence Lerner

away half crippled. But only one galleon sank and two made for the Netherlands half-sinking. The very winds which made a concerted attack difficult for the English scattered the smaller and more lightly armed Spanish vessels far and wide, out of range of the English ships which would otherwise have destroyed them wholesale.

The change of wind to the south-west broke off the action before the English had won a devastating victory, and enabled Medina Sidonia to pull away with his shattered galleons to the north-west, gathering the scattered transports and supply ships as he went. The English fleet could have renewed the battle if it had had the means, but powder and shot had run out. The Spanish fleet conserved what little it could but did not need it, since the pursuit was a nominal one only. Howarth's assumption that Medina Sidonia had no pilots for this region is mistaken since the Hanseatic *urcar*, among the reassembled merchantmen, had frequently sailed that way and could guide him. The galleons mostly survived the Atlantic storms but very many of the other ships did not.

Howarth does his best with such narratives as Spaniards left of their experiences, but the laconic *Diario* of Medina Sidonia is backed only by a very uneven array of further narratives and later recollections of the fighting from the Spanish side. It is not surprising that he gives good measure to the adventures of Francisco de Cuellar, after his shipwreck on the Silgo coast. This account was first published in English in 1893 (by the Royal Irish Academy) and not, as Howarth thinks, in 1897. He links this up with the underwater explorations of the Girona by Robert Sténul, by Sidney Wignall and Colin Wilson, and the Santa Maria de la Rosa and the Perry Sub-aqua Club of La Trinidad. Very little is known, to make a vivid story of the wreckage of between twenty and twenty-six of the mainly lighter vessels on the Irish coast. He does not, however, link these discoveries,

especially as set out in Wilson's *Full Faith and Credit* and his more technical study in the *International Journal of Maritime Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* in 1979, sufficiently with the structure and armament of the Armada ships which had so much to do with their failure. He stresses, too, without adequate explanation, the English killing of several thousand shipwrecked men.

In fact the importance of the Armada and its defeat may have been greater for Ireland than for almost anywhere else. The English officials there expected its mere arrival in the Channel to set off a general insurrection of the Irish and Old English alike. News of its defeat led them to draw back from the brink. But the uncompromising killing of almost everyone captured (as had been done in comparable circumstances by Spain) seemed essential in order to ensure that resistance would not revive. In 1589 an official reported that all preparations for rising had ceased. The example secured a few years of peace, though the Nine Years' War began in 1594 and gradually spread through Ireland. Spain, having experienced English ruthlessness in 1588-89, sent no appreciable aid until 1601, when Philip II was dead and it was anyhow too late to help the insurgents.

We should perhaps go a little further into the Armada in its broader perspective. Geoffrey Parker, in a cautionary tale in *History* (1976), made it clear that if Parma had indeed landed, his army, with reinforcements from the Armada, would have made short work of the English and land forces, so that the unity and effectiveness of the English fleets in preventing the possibility of a crossing was vital. Thus far the traditional version of the role of Howard, Drake and the rest is confirmed. But did Spain suffer much from losing 10,000 men and something like half her fleet? It now seems that the best ships got back, mostly in very bad shape, and that a number of them were capable of being repaired. Philip learned little from the defeat, since he sent two further abortive

fleets against England, yet he did at least strengthen the naval protection of his empire and the fortifications in the Caribbean to prevent the long privateering war from destroying the core of his empire (more silver not less got through in the 1590s), even if the Caribbean was weakened beyond full repair by plunder, looted by trade and colonization. John Elliott, however, saw the year 1588 as a turning point in *Imperial Spain* (1963), he wrote "if any one year marks the division between the triumphant Spain of the first two Habsburgs, and the defeated, disillusioned Spain of their successors, that year was 1588." Elizabethan England acquired a great deal of prestige from what had happened, but did not ever again commit the whole of the Queen's fleet in any of the subsequent enterprises in the war, and so perhaps ensured that none were complete successes and a few were failures. Perhaps the victory made Elizabeth feel too big for her boots, since her later interventions in the Netherlands and France, at the same time as she was involved in the total conquest of Ireland, were more than she could really afford, creating major problems for her successors.

This is rather a long way from Howarth's book, whose scope is more modest. He does, in one way or another, bring out the unrealistic nature of the Spanish enterprise. Its defective strategy and tactics, and also the tenacity and endurance shown by the galleon commanders and their seamen. In circumstances where defeat might have been total, Spain saved enough to claim an honorable setback - the elements could be blamed, rather than the English, for what had happened to the ships in the Atlantic. If he had absorbed more completely the full range of recent scholarship on the Armada David Howarth could have done more to make clear the fortunes and fate of "La Armada Invencible", but his book as it stands is forceful, skilled and readable and makes a lively if limited contribution to the unfolding story.

Prudently paradoxical

By Michael Hofmann

ALAN MENHENNET:
The Romantic Movement
276pp. Croom Helm. £15.95.
0 7099 0381 2

The Romantic Movement forms Part 6 in a *Literary History of Germany*, and by its standards, the series should prove a useful one. Alan Menhennet's study is at once detailed and wide-ranging, fair-minded and not impersonal. It covers those writers in the period 1790-1830 whom he regards as quintessentially Romantic: von Arnim, Brentano, Eichendorff, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Kleist, Novalis and Tieck. In accepting both chronological and stylistic limits, and excluding on the one hand the non-Romantic contemporaries of these writers such as Goethe (like Shakespeare, traditionally a special case) and Hölderlin, and on the other those slightly later, but still romantically-oriented writers like Mörike and Lenau, Professor Menhennet adopts the conflicting guidelines of the movement-study and the historical survey. The result is that his book is focussed on the fiercest, most doctrinaire manifestations of Romanticism in a way that is not always congenial to its author. There are occasional barbed remarks and *cris de coeur* that betray his feeling, like this audible sigh of exhausted patience at some of the drama produced by the Romantics: "The texture is too thin, and one begins to long for more substantial fare. Man cannot live on *hors d'oeuvres* alone."

The limits imposed on Menhennet's study, confining him to a handful of major authors and perhaps a score of others, involve him in several similarly unfavourable judgments, but it would be wrong to conclude from this that the writer is out of sympathy with his subject-matter. The Romantics created their own absurdity, and Menhennet's exposition, though pointed, is hardly malicious. "Was which he (Novalis) encounters through the Crusaders, has the tendency to become 'Dichtung' and the participants, 'unwillkürlich von Poesie durchdrungene Weltkräfte'." Such a sentence only illustrates the sanity of Menhennet's approach, his way of placing evaluative checks upon his material. It is tempting to let oneself be carried along with the swelling phrases of Novalis, his "world-forces" involuntarily steeped in poetry, but the critic intervenes to point out the nationalism and militarism that are latent in such a vague and crepuscular view of history.

This, in fact, is where the strength of the book lies: in its successful

identification of Romantic attitudes and beliefs. The general introductory chapter, "The Romantic Mentality," is particularly good, generating a real feeling of excitement in the reader as Menhennet discusses the religious and political affiliations of the Romantics, the interior dimension of much of their writing (its appeal to the *Gemüt*), their longing for another, harmonious world for their preference for mixed forms and the tendency of their work towards fragmentation. Most refreshing, perhaps, in Menhennet's portrayal of the Romantics is his salutary emphasis on the use they had for rational thought. The Romantics were sophisticated intellectuals, whose aim was not to destroy thought, but to extend its empire into realms previously thought to be beyond its scope. One of the most mystically inclined Romantics, Franz von Baader, rejects the view attributed to Rousseau that 'man, when he begins to think, ceases to feel' as "Poltronnerie gegen die Spekulation." Though in many of their pronouncements they were given to giddy paradoxes, and they held a deep loathing for the Philistinism that followed the Enlightenment, yet one of their cardinal virtues was *Besonnenheit* (meaning calm or prudence). While by its very nature, Romanticism could never succeed as a half-hearted undertaking, most of the Romantics were all too aware of the dangers of excess. Menhennet argues, for E. T. A. Hoffmann's work, for instance, finds its subjects in the border area between imagination and madness, between Romantic *Schmerz* and plain delusion.

After this excellent introductory chapter, most of the rest of *The Romantic Movement* is taken up with short discussions of single authors and their works, as in most critical studies of this kind. Many of these analyses are interesting and to the point, but it is possible to regret a certain diffuseness, especially in contrast to the book's beginning. A straggler's march-past, rather than a gleaming kiln-inspection, Menhennet continues to make "a good many cross-references from one of the Romantics to another, but much of the information, not being organized around themes, appears merely incidental. At the same time, drawing as he does upon a limited range of authors, some of the works he discusses are - often to his own evident dissatisfaction - little more than curiosities in literary history. All the more reason to welcome an "Excursus" on Jean Paul, which begins engagingly: "The positioning of this section has caused no little heart-searching," and proceeds to discuss the heterodox Romantic, who, so Professor Menhennet informs us, had the baroque habit of keeping a card-index system of metaphors, using about two hundred abstract concepts for classification.

Gnome-dropping

By Peter Kemp

NILS-D. JAAKS and ROSE A. ZIM-BARDO (Editors)
Tolkien New Critical Perspectives
175pp. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. \$10.50.
0 8181 1408 X

If you see Tolkien's work as not much more than a portentous blend of *Beowulf* and *Big Bear*, this isn't the book for you. Aimed at readers of "the cultic phenomenon" (as one contributor refers to it), it's an anthology, largely made up of near-hagiographical essays. There are a few interesting details - such as the news that "Frodo's name was originally Ringo, but Tolkien, as he wrote, grew more and more dissatisfied with that name". But, for the most part, the claims predominate. We hear of "the great trilogy", are assured that "Tolkien and Swift are different (largely in mood)", and that

The Silmarillion "demands comparison with *Paradise Lost* and *The Illiad*."

Among rebarbative topics touched upon is a discussion of whether Aragorn's deed was a pterodactyl, and an analysis of his name (highly evocative for a philologist who has studied European legends of the last millennium). Involving much etymological recourse to Old English and Old Irish, Greek and Gothic, Old Swedish, Old Norse, and Old High German. A note of some solemnity prevails: "The hobbit is a tender parody of *Vilfrid* man". The slow reproductive rate of the dwarves foreshadows their gradual extinction - though, occasionally, something coyer peeps out as when one writer declares of hobbits: "they are still here, and though they hide from us by their quiet way, some of us have sometimes seen them". Plausibly, plucking over the gnomes and the gnomes, the book finally springs a surprise. Oddly, but honourably, it includes as its last piece a briskly devastating catalogue of Tolkien's weaknesses by Robert M. Adams.

FICTION

Learning the tricks of the trade

By Janet Morgan

DAVID NIVEN:
Go Slowly, Come Back Quickly
382pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.
0 241 10690 7
BARRY NORMAN:
Have a Nice Day
182pp. Quartet Books. £6.50.
0 7043 2292 7

In an Author's Note, written from Goa (Goa?), David Niven thanks "a friend of mine, a world-famous author" who was asked whether he had "any hot tips for writing a novel". Mr Niven gives the following version of his friend's reply: "Well, he said, you could perhaps try... giving it a beginning, a middle and an end. Those three steps are, surely, significant. What are the trade secrets which he meanly withholds from us? Close inspection of his novel may give the answer."

First, there is *Sex*: the hero... six feet two inches tall... possessor of magnificent athlete's body... blond all-American good looks... slanting green eyes... deadlocked football game finally crunches to close... Carole... gorgeous seventeen-year-old cause of his arousal... her mother's little white bouse on Chestnut Street... mother visiting relatives in San Francisco.

Having made this gesture, Mr Niven eschews further *Sex*, apart from the occasional reference to... great expertise... imaginative love-making... variety of her demands... instinctive compliance with any unspoken whim... screams of delight... (and later when the hero returns home unexpectedly at night)... "over the top of the sofa something white moving rhythmically up and down... pink satin shoe on a leg he knew too well..."

Carole bows out on page fourteen, with a brief reappearance a couple of hundred pages later on when, still gorgeous, she has a husband and small child. Her place is taken by Pandora, the daughter of an Earl. At weekends Pandora disappears to Hawkmoor: marble floor... endless passage of squeaking oaken boards... used to be the nurseries... There is a somewhat improbable butler (His Lordship will be glad to fix you, Sir?), a helpful footman (... to open door in peeling... squeeze toothpaste onto toothbrush... lay it across tumbler...) and Pandora's dotty but endearing father, whose late wife would have him over the park beneath the full moon, "touching him up with the whip". Hawkmoor and the Earl take up no more than twenty pages, but that is enough to provide a second essential ingredient, *Snobbery*. (It may also suggest a *Sense of History*, since thirty-odd years ago a court was told how a Labour Cabinet Minister's brother had induced his wife to drive him over the estate, harnessed to a "Bodices chariot".)

Violence comes in larger doses - after all, the story opens in 1938. The hero's mother (blonde hair peeked out from headscarf... still remarkable figure neatly silhouetted within belted white raincoat...) and her second husband, Captain Rainbird (... ruddy-complexioned man... direct blue eyes... twill breeches, cloth galathea, brown boots, long-waisted jacket, deerstalker, shepherd's crook... damn glad to meet you; young feller...) perish while escaping from fallen France (... Faugot two-seater... traffic jam, machine-gunned... exhausted arm, cart... feet raw and bleeding... the *Landscapist*... woman begging for life-jacket for little girl... motherly remark "It's a good California beach girl" bands hers over... fuel oil... machine gunning... hit in heart or head... Captain Rainbird reports to bridge to help bomb down tunnel)... The hero's father (... quiet, aristocratic ex-cavalryman... Skoll-

mowski's family estate at Melnic... last time Stanislas saw father... plane circles Aeropolis... blue lands, evening breeze heavy with thyme... plane circles Aeropolis... "your mother has asked me for a divorce"... is wiped out in the Katyn massacre. This reference does double service, supplying, as well as *Violence*, *Verisimilitude*. Ditto Stani's own war effort: "... Admiralty erects catapults on forecastles of merchant ships to project fighter aircraft into mid-Atlantic sky... Stani strapped into his Hurricane... if rockets fail, horrible death in churning propellers... if not, mortal and lonely combat with giant Condor... two false starts after Condor... hide and seek... muffled explosion... burning rubber... struggles to get free... parachute nearly castrates him... inflates dinghy... freezing cold... ships pass quite close... catches rain water in sail... ice forms in dinghy... cool white sheets... hole in foot tidied up... right side of face remade... a few honourable scars... DFC... convalescent in "large, Tudor-style country house" of "whisky megatons of high finance and political power"... in plain, poor shape). One way and another there are a good many birds in this tale: when Stani must decide whether or not to stay with Pandora and Hollywood, it is "not as easy as a cornorant heading East for fish or an egret going West in search of frogs". At Hawkmoor (note the name), he misses the pheasants but surprises a German alarm, who is allowed to escape; there is Captain Rainbird himself and the Earl's nickname is Cuckoo. Not much *Subtlety* here.

Then there is *Technical Expertise*. Stani, at a loose end as Pandora starts to make her name in Hollywood, takes up photography and rapidly becomes so adept that Russell Bancroft, head of the film studio employing Pandora, arranges a month's apprenticeship with Richard Avedon (thereby getting Stani out of the way of Pandora's film premiere, after which Bancroft hopes to seduce her). What with one thing and another (the pink satin shoe incident... Bancroft soaked in the jaw... forced to strip... tied to tree in back garden of famous gossip columnist, rescued by milkman... surely implausible; wouldn't milk be bought in supermarket?), Stani and Avedon fail to meet, but our hero is commissioned to photograph the Doukhobors (Fighters Against the Spirit... persecuted by various Czars... banished to Caucasus 1890... shipped to Saskatchewan... now settle Kootenay Hills, British Columbia). Though their name is not always correctly spelt, they represent *Philosophy* and *Ecology* (worldly

goods mean nothing to us... never carry weapons of any sort... clusters of stone and wooden dwellings... sturdy square shapes wielding scythes... There is more *Ecology*, incidentally, at the end of the novel, when Pandora and Stani, reunited, flee to a desert island (pink hibiscus... pink beach... crystal clear sea), which also offers more *Subtlety* (hurricane... fences broken at Alligator Farm... Voodoo... drinking blood... hoists Pandora over shoulders... stomach contracts with fear... reaches devastated hospital in jungle).

Symbolism is dealt with by the introduction of a swan, stabled chez Rainbird, and enabled to leave after Stani enlarges the village pond. Adrift after his battle in the air, the delicious Stani believes the swan has landed on his dinghy. During their ordeal in the eye of the hurricane, Pandora asks "again and again, like a child, what will happen to the poor birds?" and this is also her first question on emerging from her home in the last paragraph (thus showing that Stani is not undamaged, even though by this time the reader's is in pretty poor shape). One way and another there are a good many birds in this tale: when Stani must decide whether or not to stay with Pandora and Hollywood, it is "not as easy as a cornorant heading East for fish or an egret going West in search of frogs". At Hawkmoor (note the name), he misses the pheasants but surprises a German alarm, who is allowed to escape; there is Captain Rainbird himself and the Earl's nickname is Cuckoo. Not much *Subtlety* here.

Most ostentatious of all is Mr Niven's use of *Hollywood* to enthrall his readers. Names are unashamedly dropped - here we are at Pandora's premiere: "the flash bulbs of the massed media, still warm from popping into the faces of Rita Hayworth, Gary Cooper, James Cagney, Greer Garson, Robert Taylor, Claudette Colbert, Pat Muni and a hundred others, became a veritable firework display when Bancroft stepped forward and embraced his new star". And at the party afterwards: "Jennifer Jones, marvelously like her glowing screen image... introduced Pandora to Cary Grant, to Tyrone Power and Annabell, to Clark Gable and Sylvia Fairbanks, to Hitchcock, Charles Boyer, Jimmy Stewart and his wife Gloria, to Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, to

describing her own life and its link between their third and fourth wives, or about the shortage of goats for a dowry, and what could I say? No doubt Irma Kurtz would have done it much better.

Della, heroine of *Sob, Sister*, is, like Irma, a goy aunt for a woman's magazine. She too is an expatriate Jewish New Yorker, now somewhere in her forties, who has settled in London, become a successful journalist, and lives in unmarried contentment with her son, Jake. Like Irma, Della believes that marriage as an institution is a non-starter.

The novel's structure is simple. Strong, supportive Della has acquired a number of dependants and hangers-on, together with an unbearable habit of giving good advice forcefully. By the end of the book she has got them all, except for her son, and is no longer interested in giving advice to anybody. Clearly, these two books illuminate each other in certain ways. For instance, the reader of *Sob, Sister* may speculate upon Irma Kurtz's fantasy life, as evoked in the detail of Della's life. Irma lives in Shepherd's Bush, but Della has made it to Chelsea. Della's (and Irma's?) American provenance is ever more evident: there is her preoccupation with the making and eating of sweets and cakes. (I once saw an extraordinary survey in which a number of well-known people were asked to describe things they didn't like. The list of dislikes was less remarkable for being possibly mistaken than for the author's simply

Ronald Colman, Marlene Dietrich, to writers like Dorothy Parker, Ben Hecht and Harry J. Kurnitz, to Cole Porter and many others." (David Niven? Ronald Reagan?).

Hollywood is not, however, all glamour. Pandora's film, *The Ruby Ring*, is filmed in extremely uncomfortable conditions in Mexico (strangling cockroaches... dusty concrete stairs... sagging bed... 1900 vintage wooden steamer... alligator-infested waters of the Golfo de Campeche) and the producer and director fight constantly. The director, Gruskin, is a particularly unpleasant character, who goads his cast and crew by jabbing them with a "goosing stick" (more birds), a ten-foot bamboo pole topped by a plaster cast of Gruskin's own hand, fist clenched and second finger rudely extended. Gruskin prods people's bottoms with this horrid device, little suspecting that Stani, the producer, has inserted a tiny microphone into the end of it, in order to tape-record Gruskin's foul and self-incriminating remarks (... "time is money, and we're on Stem time now, boys!"). Keep the sonofabitch happy, then we do it the way I'll be in the picture." Stani sees Gruskin, Gruskin sees Stani and Metropolis Studios sue them both. But by this time the reader is so confused that he doesn't notice.

There is no need to say anything about plot, style, characterization; the passages cited above will allow you to draw your own conclusions. Mr Niven has tried hard, too hard; but his book is not a success. There remains, of course, the important question: *who is Mr Niven's friend?* The world-famous author, one suspects, is Barry Norman. He is clearly more experienced, since his Hollywood novel is shorter, plottier and, since it is a *roman à clef*, more sophisticated. It has a jolly black pimp, whose team includes a lovable whore, who marries a sweet and naive, commissioned on the strength of a *Sunday Times* "Life in the Day of..." feature, a young whirling babies' bottoms and rowing with husbands might have had the tawdry fascination of the television series *The Family*, but the author has disguised it as fiction, changing the heroine's name to Janet, so that we are left with a Margaret Drabble plucked by Samuel Beckett.

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There is no need to say anything about plot, style, characterization; the passages cited above will allow you to draw your own conclusions. Mr Niven has tried hard, too hard; but his book is not a success. There remains, of course, the important question: *who is Mr Niven's friend?* The world-famous author, one suspects, is Barry Norman. He is clearly more experienced, since his Hollywood novel is shorter, plottier and, since it is a *roman à clef*, more sophisticated. It has a jolly black pimp, whose team includes a lovable whore, who marries a sweet and naive, commissioned on the strength of a *Sunday Times* "Life in the Day of..." feature, a young whirling babies' bottoms and rowing with husbands might have had the tawdry fascination of the television series *The Family*, but the author has disguised it as fiction, changing the heroine's name to Janet, so that we are left with a Margaret Drabble plucked by Samuel Beckett.

But in fact these purely imagined scenes, not featuring Della, are among the best things in the book. *Sob, Sister* improves considerably as it goes along. At the beginning the background - Della's house, her furniture, food and drinks, household organization - emerges much more clearly than the characters. But by the end the characters have started to take over: they are more than mere puppets. With "catch phrases" the transformation takes place when the novel's centre ceases to be the immaculately-organized Della, either because others take the stage or because her own life begins to fall to bits and so (one hopes and assumes) ceases to resemble that of Irma in every detail. The effort of imagination thus entailed seems to release the author from his factual trap. Next time she should be more adventurous. The whole point about writing a novel is that, even if you are an agony aunt, you can escape from living an agony aunt's life.

There is a certain fairness about *Sob, Sister*, which stems from the honest feeling - and less measurable for being possibly mistaken - that the author is simply

producer, and a dipsomaniac, believes he has a mission to denounce fornicators and bursts into Kaine's breakfast nook, so shocking the old man that he expires. Tracy-Lou falls into Kaine's bed, which has been keeping for Lorraine, a lovely waitress, who has gone off instead with Alice, Warbottle's lesbian assistant. Willard Kaine's former wife, Ida, describes to Pendleton in a tape-recorded interview how her ex-husband murdered his first wife. Payne, who will not broadcast the interview while Kaine is alive, secures Pendleton's dismissal. After Kaine's death, Pendleton publishes the interview and is acclaimed. The second Mrs Kaine (Ida) takes the fee and goes off to live with a tribe of pygmies in Brazil, and Rex Angell takes Pendleton on as his authorized biographer.

A silly story, full of carefully harvested remarks, but, compared with David Niven's, a tidily and rapidly written one. None the less, Hollywood movies are on the whole more entertaining than these Hollywood novels, not least because you can speed up the video recording.

The beaming good nature of Gracie Fields, Arthur Askey, Jack Warner and Cyril Fletcher may well be a little much for some people to take, and it is hard to read their mologues (in *The Book of Comic and Dramatic Monologues*; compiled and introduced by Michael Marshall. 206pp. EMI Tree Books/EMI Music Publishing. £9.95 paperback, £6.50 0 241 10738 5) without hearing their voices, salt-of-the-earth voices booming and cackling away. But, for the unprejudiced, this exhaustive compilation could provide hours of tinkling jollity.

Ten and Translucence: The Diary of a Happy Housewife (by Diane Harwood, 164pp. Virago. £5.95, paperback £2.95, 0 85068 123 8) was commissioned on the strength of a *Sunday Times* "Life in the Day of..." feature, a young whirling babies' bottoms and rowing with husbands might have had the tawdry fascination of the television series *The Family*, but the author has disguised it as fiction, changing the heroine's name to Janet, so that we are left with a Margaret Drabble plucked by Samuel Beckett.

Craig Brown

Piling on the agony

By Ruth Brandon

IRMA KURTZ:
Sob, Sister
208pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.
IRMA KURTZ:
Crises, a guide to your emotions
146pp. Ebury Press. £4.95.

Irma Kurtz gives advice to the life-and-lovelorn, and to those generally out of control, every path in *Cosmopolitan*. (This and no other is the reason why *Crises* is subtitled "A Cosmopolitan Book".) She clearly reveals in her work, now publishing, simultaneously, a distillation of this advice (*Crises*) and a novel about being an agony aunt (*Sob, Sister*). If the flyleaf didn't tell you, the author was a New Yorker you might guess it from reading such titles, in *Crises*, as "Enjoying Happiness", "Escaping from Depression", and "Anger is a Healthy Emotion". In fact the last New York some twenty years ago, and spent some years knocking around Paris before deciding to settle in London, where she became a successful journalist and a blissfully unwed mother. Such varied experience certainly seems an excellent qualification for her present job. There is no substitute for first-hand acquaintance with people's problems, as I found to my cost during my own spell as agony aunt while working for the BBC's "Woman's Service". People would write about the jealousy rag-

describing her own life and its link between their third and fourth wives, or about the shortage of goats for a dowry, and what could I say? No doubt Irma Kurtz would have done it much better.

Della, heroine of *Sob, Sister*, is, like Irma, a goy aunt for a woman's magazine. She too is an expatriate Jewish New Yorker, now somewhere in her forties, who has settled in London, become a successful journalist, and lives in unmarried contentment with her son, Jake. Like Irma, Della believes that marriage as an institution is a non-starter.

The novel's structure is simple. Strong, supportive Della has acquired a number of dependants and hangers-on, together with an unbearable habit of giving good advice forcefully. By the end of the book she has got them all, except for her son, and is no longer interested in giving advice to anybody. Clearly, these two books illuminate each other in certain ways. For instance, the reader of *Sob, Sister* may speculate upon Irma Kurtz's fantasy life, as evoked in the detail of Della's life. Irma lives in Shepherd's Bush, but Della has made it to Chelsea. Della's (and Irma's?) American provenance is ever more evident: there is her preoccupation with the making and eating of sweets and cakes. (I once saw an extraordinary survey in which a number of well-known people were asked to describe things they didn't like. The list of dislikes was less remarkable for being possibly mistaken than for the author's simply